

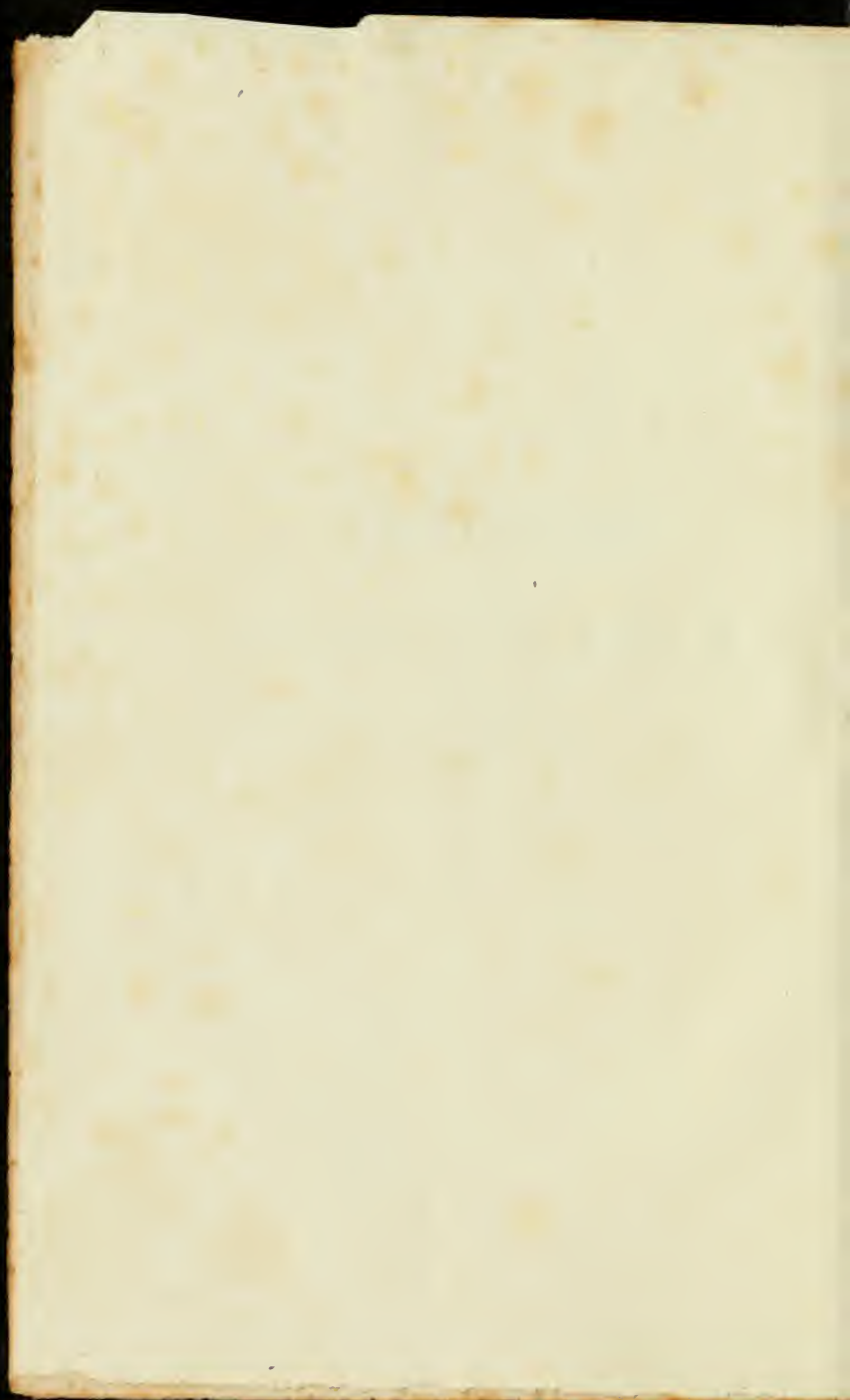


2 vols
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THE HUGUENOTS
IN
FRANCE AND AMERICA.

VOL. I.



THE
HUGUENOTS
IN
FRANCE AND AMERICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE EXPERIMENTS OF LIVING,"
"LIFE AND TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER," "LIFE
AND TIMES OF THOMAS CRANMER," ETC.

"L'histoire est un miroir, qui, pour rendre la ressemblance, doit réfléchir le bien et le mal."
ANQUETIL.

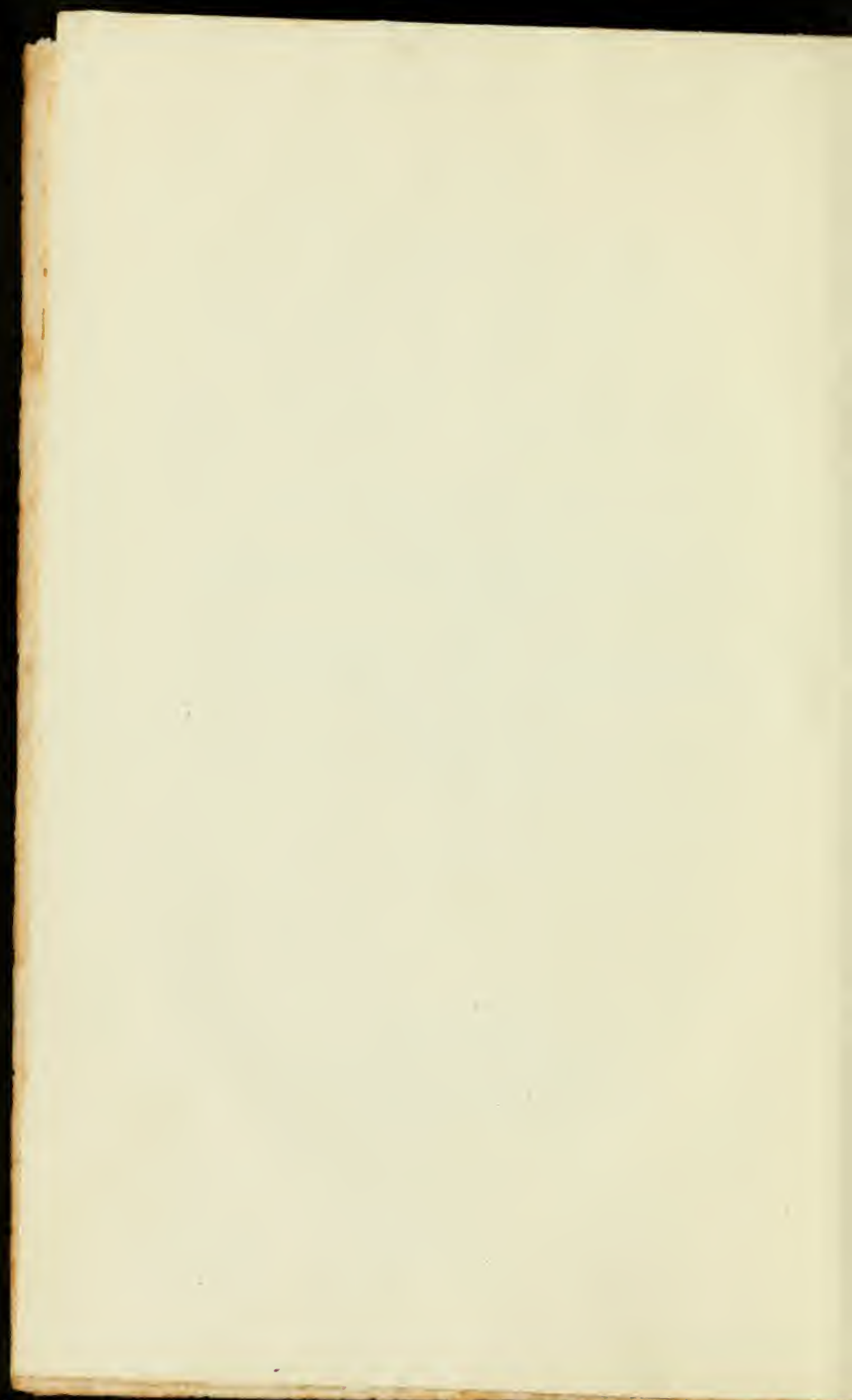
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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HONORABLE JOHN PICKERING,
BY HIS FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.



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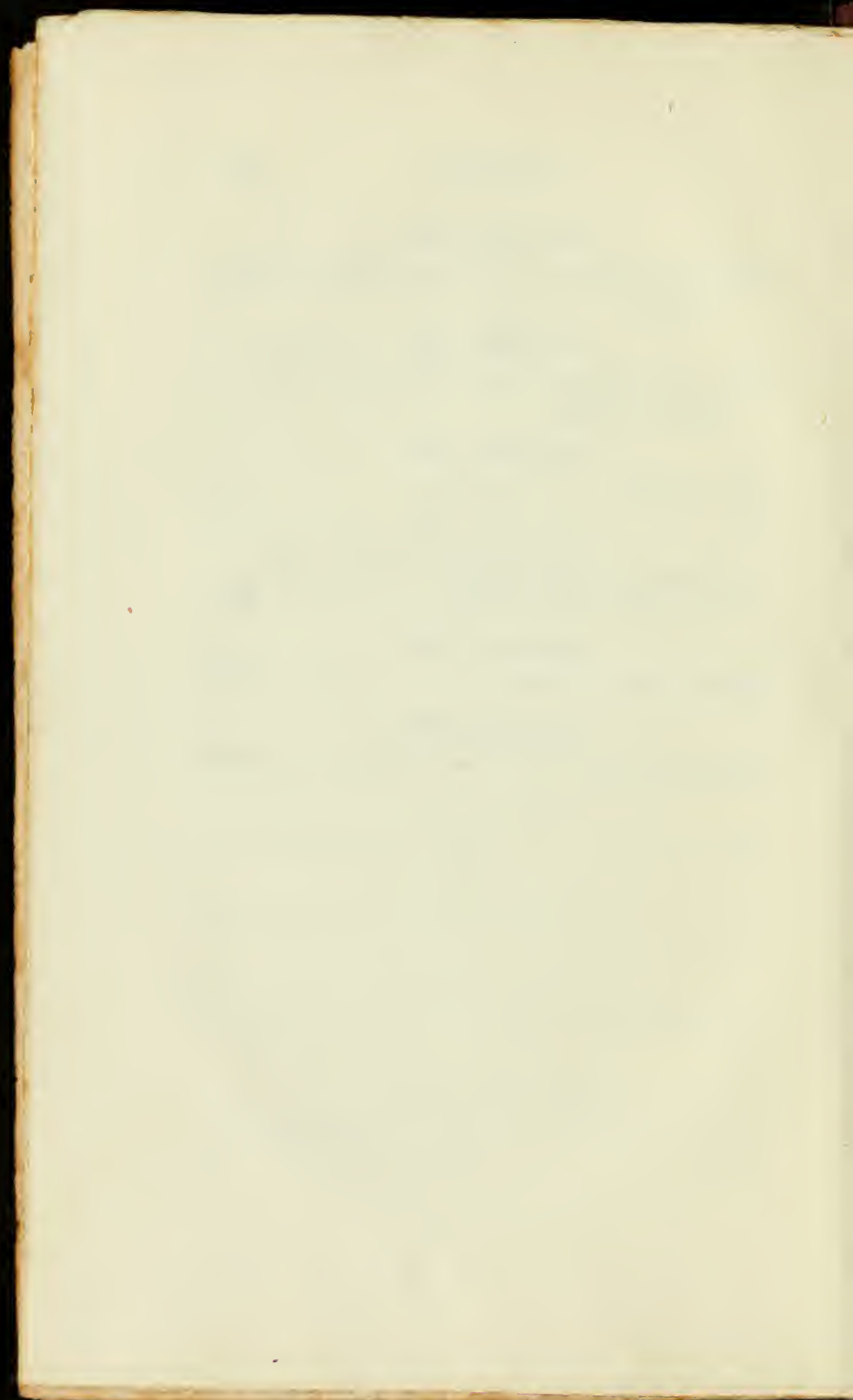
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P R E F A C E .

IT has been my endeavour, in the series of books on the Reformation, which the history of the Huguenots closes, ("Luther" and "Cranmer" having preceded it,) to preserve undeviatingly the truth of history, always reserving to myself the right of free and impartial judgment, where narratives, as is sometimes the case, differ. Having consulted historians and biographers, I might have encumbered the works with notes and references; but this would have been inconsistent with my plan. Davila, Montluc, Bassompierre, Anquetil, St. Simon, Sully, Voltaire, Smedley, Wraxall, Sismondi, and many others have been consulted; but references are seldom made, except where history has approached, as all readers must be aware it often does, so near to romance as to wear the appearance of fiction.

A mere compilation of facts presents only the skeleton of History; we do but little for her if we cannot invest her with life, clothe her in the habiliments of her day, and enable her to call forth the sympathies of succeeding generations. As the German scholar Ruhnkenius admonished his pupils, "It is a knowledge of men, not of things, which we

want, the spirit quickened by great and noble deeds; or a holy and just indignation kindled towards vice, however splendidly adorned." Unless history can be converted to moral uses, it is only "a little book got by heart." It were well if our slumbering virtue could be roused by the self-sacrificing example of those who relinquished all for principle.

For the facts collected concerning the Huguenots who took refuge in America, I am indebted to kind friends. Some have placed manuscripts in my hands, and others have directed me to records already published. Such as I have been able to procure, I have given without embellishment or pretension, and often with a painful consciousness of deficiency in materials and execution, yet hoping, that, combined, they may be more interesting and useful, than in the scattered and detached form in which I have gleaned them.

The Memoir of the family of La Fontaine, published in New York, and translated by one of the descendants, finds no corresponding memoir in this country. Yet there are enough records left to prove, that a similar noble spirit animated the Huguenots in America. From this most interesting manuscript, I have been permitted to extract the following passage not inserted in the printed edition. I give part of it in the old French, that the arduous work of the translator may be appreciated.

James Fontaine, the author of the Memoir, thus writes ;

"Elisabeth Fontaine 3^e fille du premier mariage

de mon père fut mariée à M. Iza Santreau, ministre de Saujou en Xaintonge, sous qui j'ay étudié. Ils avoient trois garçons et deux filles, sortirent de France quelques années avant la grande persécution, aussitôt que la temple de son église fut condamné. Ils vienrent à Dublin dans la fin du règne du Roy Charles Second. On ne voulut point luy permettre de prescher après la manière de France, et sans recevoir une seconde ordination des Esveques; car en ce tems-là les Presbiterieux estoient persecutés en Angleterre et Hirlande par les Episcopesaux." Finding his residence there unpleasant, on that account he resolved to go, with all his family, to Boston, in America, where the Presbyterians had full liberty. He and his wife, with five children, embarked on board a vessel. The vessel was wrecked when in sight of Boston, and the whole family was drowned! "So that we may with great justice," he adds, "reckon the seven persons among the martyrs of our family; for they came out of France, abandoning a very good property for the fruit of the tree of life, and Ireland, for the leaves and the bark."

This simple statement is made without any comment in the original manuscript; but who will not feel his sympathy excited by the fate of these unfortunate exiles, who first sought refuge in Ireland; driven thence by a different species of religious persecution, and once more trusting themselves on the pathless ocean in pursuit of liberty? What joy must have filled their hearts, as they entered the beautiful

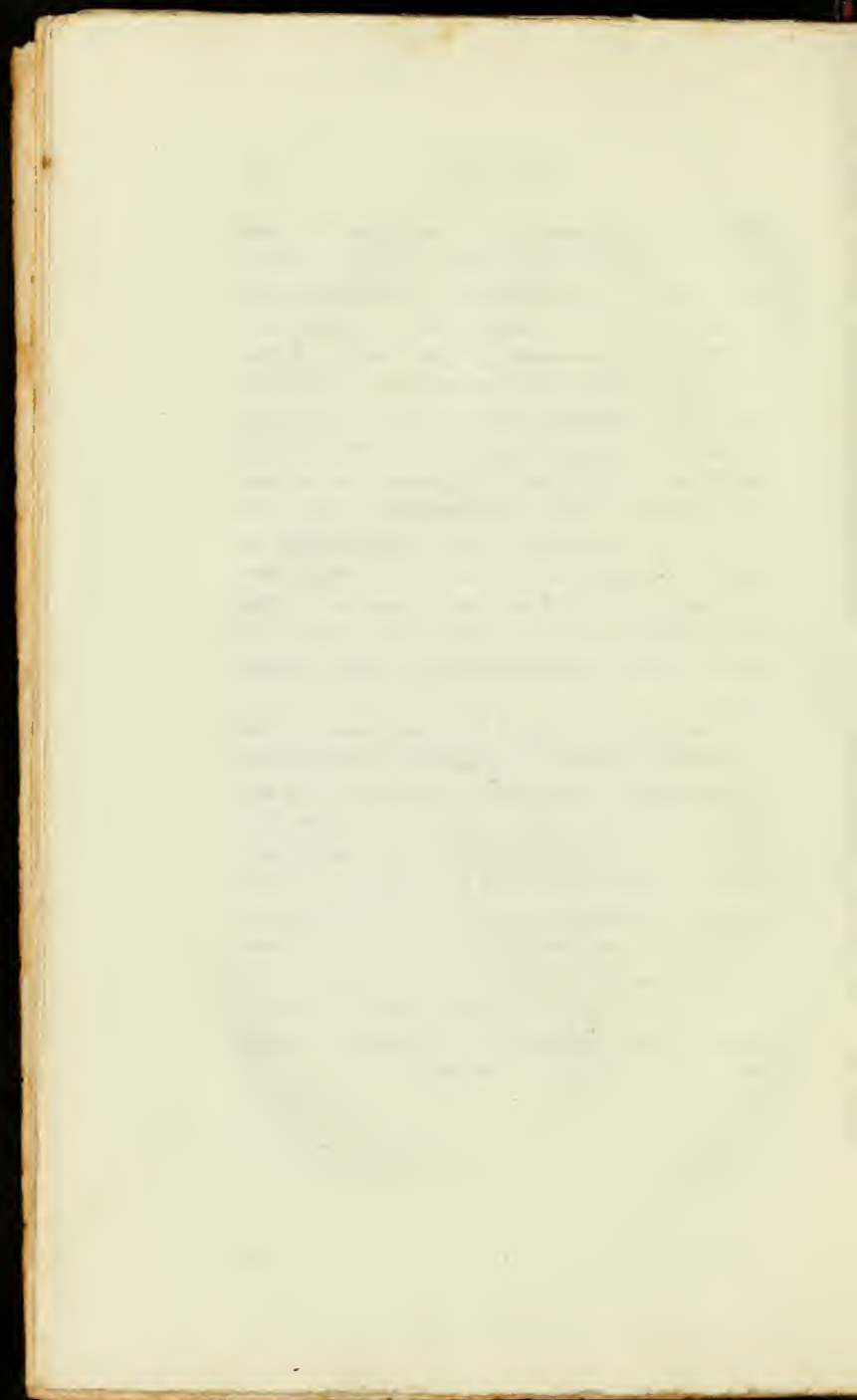
bay of Boston, and saw indications of the New World! Perhaps their eyes already rested on a solitary spire "pointing to Heaven," and encouraging them onward. We are not told what occasioned the wreck of the vessel, whether an unskilful pilot, or a sudden tempest; but we can hardly doubt, that "she had noble creatures on board," and that "they all perished!"

I give the following quotation from a letter which I have lately received from a lineal descendant of the Huguenots.

"My great-great-grandfather was a native of La Vendée, and had there an estate on which he lived, and from which his family took their name, *La Tourette*. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, several Huguenot families in his neighbourhood endured great persecution, and Henri de la Tourette was warned, that he was soon to be molested, and that any attempt at flight would be discovered, and only serve to hasten his condemnation. To avoid suspicion, he gave a large entertainment to which all the neighbouring families were invited, and while the guests were assembled in the house, he left it with his wife, reached the seacoast, which was not far off, and made his escape on board a vessel bound to Charleston. The ship was cast away on Staten Island, or, being in distress, was obliged to put in there, and there my great-grandmother, Marie de la Tourette, was born. A branch of the family still exists in France, which has adhered to Catholicism. The only female mem-

ber of it is the Superior of a Convent, and the head of it, the Marquis de la Tourette, who is, or lately was, *préfet* of Aix-la-Chapelle. The chateau of La Tourette is still standing, but I do not know whether it is in possession of the family. A few years since, one of the descendants, the Comte Eugène de la Tourette, came over from France in the hope of obtaining the family Bible, which Henri brought over in his flight. It contained the register of the births and descents of the family, which, had it been in our possession, would have enabled us Huguenot descendants to claim property which was confiscated at the time of the persecution. The Bible, however, had been long since given to a family who had removed to Germany, and could not be traced."

The unexpected delay of this work, since it first went out of my hands in August, 1841, has given me the opportunity of adding the above facts, and a few others contributed by the descendants of the Huguenots. It has likewise afforded me the melancholy solace of adding a notice of a friend, who, by the kind and affectionate interest he took in the attempt, though he did not live to read a line of it, is associated with the work in the mind of the author. The first book of this series, "Luther and his Times," was dedicated to William Ellery Channing; the last closes with a tribute to his memory!



PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

It may not be uninteresting to give a slight sketch of the progress of the Reformation to the period at which the following history begins. The early deviations from the simple form of worship taught by Christ, and adopted by his disciples, began at Rome, under the Bishop Sylvester. His love of pomp, and his boundless ambition, led him to invest his office with forms and ceremonies. The first Christians prayed in the mountain desert and the open air ; — in dungeons and in fetters, the simple invocation of “ Our Father who art in heaven ” diffused light and freedom around them. The new convert to Christianity, Constantine, born A. D. 274, fought under the “ flaming cross,” which his enthusiastic imagination descried in the heavens beneath the sun, with this inscription ; “ *In hoc signo vinces* ” — (Under this sign thou shalt conquer). Much as he accomplished for the new faith, he evidently mistook its spirit when he banished Catholic bishops, and erected the standard of the cross as a signal for

war. That he should add outward distinctions to the despised faith he had voluntarily adopted, was natural, and worldly honors and immunities soon became bribes for the adoption of the cause. In 324, a holy and devout man, named Leo, became so much dissatisfied with the increasing corruptions of Christianity, that he withdrew with a small band of followers to the valleys of Piedmont. There they worshipped God in primitive simplicity, and were long set apart, not only from the corruptions which overspread the world, but from its temptations and its honors.

The light of reformation in 1124 was brought from those obscure valleys into France, by the zealous preaching of Peter of Bruys, Henry, and Arnold of Brescia, who suffered martyrdom for their cause. But of all the advocates for Christianity in its early simplicity, Peter Valdo, a merchant of Lyons, seems to have been the most remarkable. Amidst the toils and bustle of mercantile life, his love of reading induced him to look into the Gospels, and other books of Scripture, which a priest had translated into French. He read and studied these works till he determined to become an evangelical preacher, and devote the wealth he had acquired in worldly gains to the promulgation of the Gospel.

He employed learned men to translate the whole of the Bible, and with this in his hand, com-

menced his preaching, leaving all other avocations. He soon collected multitudes, and as he had access to no church, preached in the streets and in the fields. A bitter persecution was raised against him and his followers, and they dispersed themselves into the neighbouring countries of Langue-doc and Provence.

It has been common to assign the name of Waldenses to the Piedmontese Christians. But it appears, that they were of a much earlier date, and known by no name but that of Christians; and it is more probable that Peter Valdo* was a pupil of this ancient race, and that they had never swerved from the simplicity of the early doctrines.

It is well to mention that the antiquity of the Vaudois who inhabited the Piedmontese summits and valleys has always been a subject of dispute. The Protestants claim for them the pure faith and worship preserved from the Great Teacher; while the Catholics believe them to be a band of heretics, who at a later period threw off their allegiance to the mother Church. We think the strongest evidence is found in their simple and primitive modes of life, and in the purity of their

* Or Waldo, as his name is sometimes written. The various orthography of names, as written by different historians, is perplexing.

morals. Their religion is not like a garment that has been restored ; but it possesses the strength and excellence of the original fabric.

The Albigenses in the South of France seem to have been less fortunate than their Alpine brethren. In the twelfth century they were nearly swept from the face of the earth, and Simon de Montfort led a host against them. Numbers escaped to England, and in the fourteenth century Wickliffe appeared as a reformer. A persecution was raised against him in the times of Henry the Fourth and Henry the Fifth, yet still the light of reformation was not extinguished. John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, carried Wickliffe's doctrines into Bohemia, and, being tried before the Council of Constance, were condemned to the stake.

In the fifteenth century, it was found that heresies were spreading. The city of Meaux, within thirty miles of Paris, became leavened with the doctrines of reform, and the worship of images and saints was set aside. In 1517 Luther arose in his might. Zuinglius did the same in Switzerland ; and Calvin, following fast upon their steps, became a powerful preacher in France. At this period of the Reformation we commence our history, beginning with Francis the First.

THE HUGUENOTS

IN

FRANCE AND AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

A TRAGEDY.

IN the year 1524, the palace of Francis the First was in evident commotion. Dukes and duchesses, counts and countesses, marquises and marchionesses, with gentlemen and ladies of inferior rank, were seen hurrying to and fro. In the evening, a large and brilliantly lighted saloon was thrown open. At one end might be seen a high platform, partly concealed by a curtain that reached to the floor. At the other sat the King, surrounded by the beauties of his court. Seats were arranged on either side, one above another, as if in expectation of an exhibition.

After a prelude of music, the curtain was drawn aside, the buzz of conversation ceased, silent attention prevailed, and the drama opened.

The Pope appeared seated on an elevated throne, the tiara glittering on his brow, and his

long robes of silk and ermine falling in folds upon the floor. He was encircled by throngs of cardinals and bishops, and one, more highly distinguished than the rest, waved a fan, made from the splendid plumage of the bird of Juno, over his august head.

At a little distance stood groups of mendicant friars, strangely contrasting with the brilliancy of the spectacle. Near his Holiness lay a heap of charcoal, that gave no signs of ignition.

At length, a venerable, gray-headed man entered from the side scene, clad in a scholastic robe. A low voice announced him "Reuchlin," the celebrated German Hebraist. He walked forward in a musing posture till he came opposite the Pope, cardinals, and bishops, then, suddenly raising his eyes, he started at beholding them. His consternation, however, was momentary; summoning all his resolution, he at once addressed the venerable assembly of ecclesiastics in a spirited manner, spake freely of the abuses of the Romish Church, and the necessity of *reform*; then, with a slow and measured step, he approached the smouldering pile, and made an opening with his staff. The glowing charcoal became visible for a few moments, smoked, but did not blaze, and, as if discouraged by the ill success of his attempt, he retired, and Erasmus entered.

The cardinals pressed forward and extended their hands, which he respectfully took, then, stepping to the place which Reuchlin had just quitted, he too began an address. He gently alluded to the disorders of the Church, but spoke of its antiquity and solemn institutions ; and begged that no abrupt measures might be adopted. The disease, he acknowledged, was apparent, but it did not require an immediate operation ; there were no limbs to amputate, and time would remove the little excrescences which were visible. He concluded by recommending gentle lenitives and soothing prescriptions. At the end of his speech, he bowed low to the Pope and cardinals. The latter immediately made room for him ; he gently waved his hand, and would have retreated behind, but they insisted on his seating himself amongst them.

Next appeared Ulric Hutten, the well-known satirist of the Pope ; a man the reverse of Erasmus, possessing iron nerves and sinews. He rushed vehemently forward, and burst forth into a furious declamation against his Holiness and the Catholic conclave ; called the Pope antichrist, and denounced him as the enemy of true religion. Seizing a pair of bellows, he hastened to the smoking charcoal, and blew so violently, that the flames rose high, casting a red and glaring light upon the faces of the Pope, cardinals, and bish-

ops, who looked wild with affright. Suddenly the scene changed ; for, while he was exerting all his strength, and the flames were rapidly increasing, he fell dead on the spot. The cardinals rushed forward and carried him away, without uttering a syllable, or discovering any emotion.

To these succeeded a monk with his cowl thrown back, bearing a pile of logs on his shoulder ; he walked straight forward, turning neither to the right nor left, nor heeding the evident commotion that appeared among the august conclave. His step was bold, his port fearless, yet there was no particular air of defiance ; he was evidently engrossed by his own purpose. A low voice whispered, "Luther !" The courtly audience looked on in mute expectation. Not a sound broke the stillness. The monk approached the fire, stood for a moment as if summoning all his strength, then, casting the logs on the coals, he exclaimed, "I will make this little fire shine through the whole world, so that Christ, who has wellnigh perished by your devices, shall be restored to life in spite of you !"

Suddenly the flame burst forth, and seemed to illuminate not only the apartment, but the whole palace. The Pope and cardinals hastily arose, as if to seize the audacious monster, but, entangled in their flowing drapery, they ran against each other, and Luther in the mean time escaped.

The Pope and cardinals now entered into close deliberation as to what was to be done. "The fire," said they, "must be extinguished, or we shall be consumed." Then came forward a little, short, round brother of the fraternity, accompanied by one in the dress of the Inquisitorial office, proffering ready assistance to the pontiff. They said, that, "if his Holiness would rely upon them, and St. Peter aid them, they would pledge themselves to extinguish the fire."

This address was received with acclamations. They then beckoned to the group of mendicant friars to come forward. "Brethren," said the Pope, addressing them, "we recognise in you the righteous judges of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who were burned in the fire they had kindled. Repeat your great work as at Constance, and your reward shall be unlimited. Your fourfold order shall no longer wear rags, but be richly dressed, ride on horses splendidly caparisoned, and the aged be borne in litters. Nay, more, ye shall wear purple robes, and carry mitres on your brows. Ye shall be satiated with the fattest bishoprics. Go and prosper; stay our falling authority; secure our dominion. Let our infallibility be once more established, and, in reward, ask what you will, and it shall be granted. But, first, for our present safety, extinguish this tremendous fire."

The friars rushed forward to the flames, bearing such vessels of liquid as were at hand. They proved to be filled with wine and alcohol, in various forms ; and, no sooner had they poured it on the fire, than the flames rose with redoubled fury. The friars fled with terror, and all the conclave retreated in haste to a distance.

The cardinals were the first that recovered sufficiently to offer any counsel. They then addressed the Pope.

“ Most holy father ! To thee is given authority both in earth and heaven. Quench the fire by thy malediction, or we shall be consumed. We know that there is not any element in creation, which must not subside at thy word. Heaven and earth obey thee. At thy bidding, even Purgatory absolves or retains the souls of the departed. Wherefore, by thy saintly office, attack this fire. Quench it by thy anathemas, lest we become a by-word and a reproach.”

This petition roused the Pope. He stepped forward, and, extending his arms, exclaimed ;

“ Cursèd be he who lighted thee ! Darkness overcome thee ; night surround thee, that thou mayest no longer burn ! May he who piled thee be stricken with the sores of Egypt and loathsome disease. May God strike him with blindness, darkness, and madness, so that he may see no ray of light at noon-day ! ”

He ceased ; but the fire blazed more merrily than ever. The hapless Pope looked on for a moment ; then, being seized with a violent paroxysm of rage, he fell dead on the spot, and the falling of the curtain closed the scene.

Nothing could exceed the breathless interest of the spectators while this tragedy (as it was called) was performing. But, when it closed, the hall rung with shouts of laughter and applause, and the monarch himself was the most conspicuous in his mirth.*

This performance was undoubtedly intended as a secret recreation of the young monarch. But when were secrets held sacred at a court ? It became known abroad ; the pious Catholics heard of the sacrilege with horror, and the German Protestants with delight. This, and the coldness which existed between Charles the Fifth and Francis, determined these Protestants to apply to the monarch, and endeavour to unite his interest with theirs.

Francis received them courteously, but declined taking any part in their religious controversy, informing them that he was bound to remain inactive from an engagement he had entered into with his friend Henry the Eighth of England.

* *Tragœdia quæ Parisiis coram ipso Rege Francisco I. dicitur acta fuisse A. D. 1524. — Gerdesius.*

But, if he could obtain his consent, he would send an ambassador to them.

This ambiguous and diplomatic answer, which in truth meant nothing, was hailed by the German Protestants with joy. They soon found, however, that they were not to expect a convert or ally in Francis, any further than was immediately for his own interest.

Still, they were buoyed up by hope, notwithstanding some severe judgments which he passed on French Protestants ; for they were encouraged by his intimate alliance with Henry the Eighth, the rebellious defier of the Pope, and also by the general tone of the court, to which his sister Margaret gave a decided influence.

Nor was this all. The Duchess d'Estampes also inclined to the reformed party ; and they very naturally supposed, that the reigning favorite would sway the monarch to their cause, and make him at least indulgent towards it. They arranged themselves under the head of Sacramentarians, denying the real presence, and the use of the mass ; and some of them went so far as to put up placards, ridiculing the Pope.

However Francis might have liked the kind of amusement for himself, with which our history opens, he did not choose to encourage it in his subjects. And, accordingly, a number of Sacramentarians were arrested, an absurd story of

their conspiring to assassinate the Catholics was invented, and all of them were put to the sword.

A hollow friendship had been formed between Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, by his marriage with Eleanora, sister of the Emperor ; and Francis now determined to convince the world that he had a pious abhorrence of heresy, a strong attachment to the Catholic faith, and a profound veneration for the holy Pontiff.

To accomplish this purpose, he instituted an expiatory procession. It was in January, 1535, in the depth of a severe winter, that it took place. All the officers of the court and the foreign ambassadors were called to assist in the ceremony. The King walked, following an image of St. Genevieve, patroness of the city, borne in state before him. Costly shrines and relics were carried by bearers with naked feet and no other clothing than long shirts. The archbishop of Paris held the consecrated host. The canopy over it was borne by the three sons of the King, and the Duke de Vendôme. Francis carried a torch in his hand which he delivered every little while to the cardinals round him, and, kneeling on the ground, clasped his hands and implored the mercy of Heaven on his kingdom.

At the conclusion, the monarch addressed the assembly, declaring his horror of those, who publicly denied the most august of mysteries, the

real body and blood of Christ. So pathetic was he, that his address was often interrupted by groans and sobs. He urged his Catholic subjects to denounce all heretics without any weak compunction of pity. "If my own sons," said he, "were guilty, and seduced by these detestable novelties, I myself would be the first to punish their guilt." It is said that on the same evening he amused the beautiful but profligate Duchess d'Estampes with an account of "the farce."

A horrible tragedy it proved to the unfortunate Sacramentarians. A proclamation was issued, commanding them to be delivered up under severe penalties, and numerous executions took place, which the King witnessed.

These harsh measures were soon made known in Germany, and produced the greatest horror, which was by no means the intention of Francis. He immediately sent an embassy to give "a true account," as he said, of the whole affair, and represented, that those who had been executed were disorderly enthusiasts, not deserving the name of Protestants; that for his own part, he had read over the Confession of Augsburg, and that his views so far accorded with it, that no doubt there would be a final understanding between them. He wished that the treaty he had formed with the league of Smalcald, might remain uninterrupted. In the mean time he had despatched

another embassy to Paul the Third, then Pope, magnifying the late procession, the burning of heretics, and the deep and sincere attachment he felt to the holy See ; begging his Holiness to consider him as one of the most devoted of his adherents, and the most pious and conscientious of Catholics.

CHAPTER II.

THE VAUDOIS.

JOHN CALVIN was born at Noyon, in France, in 1509. His father intended him for the church, and he began the study of the Scriptures with zeal and diligence. During this time he was patronized by the Bishop of Noyon, and received an ecclesiastical benefice. He afterwards renounced the clerical profession, from not being able to adopt the opinions of the Church of Rome; and, by the consent of his father, became a student of law. This, however, did not prevent his theological pursuits; and he even occasionally spoke from the pulpit. The sudden death of his father induced him to remove to Paris, and there he became acquainted with many zealous supporters of the Protestant religion.

He now began to exhibit the boldness of his opinions, and at length drew upon himself the displeasure of the Sorbonne, who cited him to appear before them. Instead of obeying the summons, he wisely took the advice of his friends, and retreated to Saintonage, then a prov-

ince of France, through which the beautiful river Charente winds its devious course. In the mean time, a number of men proceeded to his lodgings in the College de Fortret, breathing fire and vengeance. Happily, they found there only his papers ; and Calvin escaped the honor of being a martyr.

These circumstances were made known to Margaret of Navarre, the sister of Francis, and she determined to protect him from Catholic zeal. She invited him to her court, received him with distinguished kindness, and introduced him to James Le Fevre, who, though advanced in years, was persecuted by the Sorbonne doctors, not only on account of his religious opinions, but for having introduced great improvements in mathematics and other branches of philosophy, which threatened to bring into disrepute their established modes of teaching. The old man confirmed the Queen in her prepossessions in favor of Calvin, assuring her, that if his life was spared, he would restore the kingdom of heaven in France.

Margaret of Navarre was first married to the Duke of Alençon, and afterwards to Henry D'Albret, King of Navarre, by whom she had Jane, mother of the celebrated Henry the Fourth. It is difficult to say whether she was most distinguished for her promotion of agriculture, commerce, and the arts, in her kingdom, or for her hu-

manity towards the persecuted Protestants. She mingled with the tenderness of a sister, complete dissatisfaction at her brother's proceedings. Through her intercession, Calvin was again permitted to return to Paris ; but she advised him to remain concealed, as it was difficult to guard him from the anger of his adversaries.

Here he heard of Servetus, who was, like himself, asserting the right of opinion, and glorying in what he considered the true belief. He had renounced the doctrine of the Trinity, and sent several treatises on religious subjects to Calvin. Opposition of opinion produced great animosity between the two polemics. Both seem to have known but little of the true character of the religion for which they were contending. Happily at that time they did not meet, though Calvin earnestly desired it.

It was during this year that the memorable "expiatory" procession of which we have given a slight account, took place, and horrible executions closed the day. Francis ordered eight Sacramentarians, or *Anabaptists*, as they were afterwards termed by way of excuse, to be burned alive in the four quarters of the city. Calvin again found that France was no residence for him, and he left it precipitately.

Charles the Fifth had seen with dismay the encouragement given to the German Protestants by

Francis, and particularly feared his joining the league of Smalcald. He immediately represented to the nation, that these professions were employed merely to ensnare them, that Francis bore an implacable enmity to the Germans, and that it was immaterial to the King of France, whether he allied himself to the infidel Turk, or the Christian believer ; and he advised all the Protestants to consider him as their inveterate foe.

Francis perceived at once that he had been guilty of a great political error in the severity of his proceedings ; and that he had furnished Charles, who in reality hated the Protestants as cordially as he did, with a weapon of attack. To obviate as far as possible the consequences of his slight indiscretion in burning a few heretics, he apologized by terming them Anabaptists ; and boldly asserted, that there was not a single German Protestant amongst them.

Margaret, feeling deep anguish at the conduct of Francis, wrote a book, entitled " The Mirror of a Sinful Soul," which was supposed to reflect a likeness of her brother. Whether Francis saw this or not, the Sorbonne pretended great offence, and wholly condemned the work.

Calvin, after various wanderings, at length settled as a pastor at Geneva. The course he pursued seems to have been one directly opposite to established customs. He denounced all holydays

except Sunday, which was to be observed with the most gloomy rigor ; he forbade baptismal fonts to be placed within his church, and refused to administer the sacrament with unleavened bread.

For a time, the Genevans resisted what they considered ecclesiastical tyranny, and Calvin retired to Strasburg. Shortly afterward he was invited to return ; and from that time, he exerted despotic sway in Geneva. His ambition was not confined to this place ; he sought to establish his opinions throughout France ; and so far succeeded, as to make his creed the great model of the Protestant societies in that kingdom.

The worship which Calvin wished to establish, was one of extreme simplicity. He not only forbade images and pictures, but banished organs from spiritual worship. He rejected the Romish chant, and substituted hymns and tunes in which every member of the society could take part, much resembling the modern Methodist music. He now considered it necessary to strengthen his rising church by alliances, and turned to the Vaudois. These inoffensive mountaineers were the only people who had preserved the faith and simplicity of primitive Christianity. Their places of worship were in their own green valleys, usually near some deep and flowing river. There, in imitation of the ancient apostles, they worshipped God, "in the beauty of holiness."

As yet, dreams of worldly ambition or church domination had never disturbed their tranquil rest. It is true, that, during the fifteenth century, the voice of persecution had sometimes reached them, and even the thunder of the Vatican had occasionally threatened at a distance. Their safety consisted in their obscurity ; and perhaps, had they been able to resist the alliance offered by Calvin, they might have been wholly forgotten. Unable, however, to refuse a connexion with the flourishing church of Geneva, they began to feel the pride of sect, and published a confession of faith and a liturgy. The mountaineers had gradually spread through the districts of Provence ; Merindol, a large town, was colonized by the Vaudois, and about thirty villages.

Their confession of faith was reported to the Parliament, and eighteen were summoned to appear. Before they had time to obey the summons, a decree of extermination was pronounced upon Merindol. The Court ordered, that, "in punishment for its damnable opinions, it should be rendered desert and uninhabitable. That every house in it should be burned or demolished, and that all buildings, coverts, and woods within two hundred paces of its circuit should be razed to the ground."

William de Bellany was then Governor of Provence, and was appointed by Francis to exe-

cute vengeance upon these innocent people. With a humanity, rare in those times, he determined to see the King, and, if possible, turn him from his cruel purpose. Francis, who had before appointed him envoy to Smalcald, condescended to receive his visit.

“I have come to represent to your Majesty,” said De Bellany, “the actual character of the Vaudois, which, in my capacity of governor, I have taken much pains to investigate. They differ from our communion in many respects, but they are a simple, irreproachable people, benevolent, temperate, humane, and of unshaken loyalty. Agriculture is their sole occupation ; they have no legal contentions, no lawsuits, or party strife. Hospitality is one of their principal virtues, and they have no beggars amongst them. They have neither locks nor bolts upon their doors. No one is tempted to steal, for his wants are freely supplied by asking.”

“They are heretics,” replied the King sternly.

“I acknowledge, Sire,” said De Bellany, “that they rarely enter our churches ; and, if they do, they pray with their eyes fixed on the ground. They pay no homage to saints or images ; they do not use holy water, nor do they acknowledge the benefit to be derived from pilgrimages, or say mass, either for the living or the dead.”

“And it is for such men as these,” said Francis, “you ask clemency ! For your sake, De Bel-lany, they shall receive a pardon, if the villagers appear before the Archbishop of Aix, within three months, renounce their heresies, and seek a reconciliation with the mother Church. If they are still rebellious, they must expect the utmost severity, and all civil and military authority will be required to afford coöperation. Think you that I burn heretics in France, in order that they may be nourished in the Alps ?”

The Vaudois too faithfully cherished their patriarchal opinions to submit to the conditions, and they awaited their doom with horror and despair. Their destruction was averted by a circumstance that would appear incredible, were it not related by authentic historians.

Chassanée was President of the Parliament of Provence ; a man remarkable for his attention to the minutiae of law while he practised at the bar. In a book which he published, he related the extraordinary “*trial of the rats.*”

Autun is one of the most ancient towns in France. It is at the foot of three mountains, and is watered by the Arroux. It is said to contain a great number of Roman antiquities. In modern times it has been noted for the residence of the famous Talleyrand, who was its last bishop.

Whether the beauty of the situation attracted

the rats, or whether it was a place remarkable for savory viands, history doth not say ; but it avers, that they descended from the mountains in armies, and, without ceremony, attacked the ancient town. Though measures were taken to destroy them, the few individuals slain seemed rather to increase than to diminish their number, and the devoted town was fast approaching a famine. In this emergency, they appealed to the ecclesiastical tribunal. The grand vicar, in imitation of the Pope, promulgated his bulls of excommunication. In the first place, the rats were cited to appear in court on a certain day. The day passed without their obeying the summons.

The grand vicar then determined that it was but just that the defendants should make known their appeal against the prosecutor, who urged a definitive sentence, and Chassanée accepted the office of advocate for the rats.

The good man argued their cause with zeal and ability. In an able manner, he refuted the assertion that the rats were contumacious from their not appearing in a body when cited. He said they were too widely dispersed to assemble generally, and that it was but just that the citation should be read after mass in every separate parish.

This was acceded to, and occasioned some delay. Still, however, the delinquents did not ap-

pear, and the advocate took a new ground. The way, he urged, was beset with cats, and was long and difficult. The accused, to appear, must encounter many hardships. They had the mountain torrent to cross, and, perhaps, might be delayed by the feebleness of the aged, and the helplessness of the young. All this proved the unfitness of the general summons. He contended that it was an unheard-of thing, and opposed to the first principles of justice, to involve in one common sentence the innocent with the guilty, parents and children together. Let them fix upon the ring-leaders, and make such an example of them as would reduce the insurgents to obedience.

Probably this measure was adopted, as the dexterous management of the cause drew upon Chassanée the applause of the learned, and some years after he was appointed President of the Provençal Parliament.

When the edict against the town of Merindol was issued, he said ; “ Can I show less mercy to men than rats ? ” He immediately entered into the cause, and, by his ingenuity, contrived so to suspend the prosecution of the Vaudois, that during his life it did not proceed.

Margaret of Navarre heard of the bloody edict with horror, and wrote to Francis, entreating mercy for this innocent and unfortunate race. She also interested the Duchess of Destampes (or

Détampes) in their cause. Francis could not refuse the poor boon of suspending his judgment on the miserable heretics, to the fair one who had sacrificed so much for him, and for a time the matter rested.

On the death of Chassanée, the Baron d'Oppede was invested with the military command. He was a man of fierce and savage temper, and stimulated by revenge to the destruction of the Vaudois.

Leonore, Countess d'Estaing, a young and beautiful woman, resided in the noble chateau of her ancestors, at the foot of the mountain. Her personal charms had attracted many suitors, but she seemed regardless of external advantages; and, adopting the religion and habits of the Vaudois, led a life of rural and tranquil simplicity. She extended her protection to the mountaineers, encouraging them by her advice and liberal pecuniary assistance.

D'Oppede had fixed his eye on the beautiful Countess, and made her the offer of his hand. But she who was so kind and gentle to every one else, discovered no yielding towards him. She treated his proposals with disdain, and would not listen to his intreaties. At length, his importunities became unceasing, and, wearied and vexed, she imprudently wrote upon a paper a single word, — *Louise*.

D'Oppede no sooner read the name, than vengeance became his watchword. Louise was the daughter of one of his tenants, and had escaped from his unhallowed pursuit by retreating with her family to the mountains. There she had married, with the approbation of the Countess, a young man residing in the chateau. Their dwelling was in one of the fastnesses of the mountain, and when she gave the name to D'Oppede, as a proof that she knew the villany of his character, she was not aware of the extent of human turpitude. He informed the royal department that the Vaudois were forming themselves into independent cantons, and preparing for rebellion. The King gave him unconditional orders to quell it. The extermination of this innocent people is too well known to require recapitulation; nor need we dwell upon it. Two and twenty villages were destroyed by fire and sword, most of the inhabitants massacred, and seven hundred reserved as galley slaves!

The French nation, and Francis himself, received the intelligence of this atrocious cruelty with something like horror. The King refused to admit D'Oppede to his presence, but suffered him to live, to execute almost as great cruelties at Meaux.

The German Protestants could no longer consider Francis friendly to their cause; and, though

Calvin had dedicated a book to him some years before, his eyes were completely opened by this last act of cruelty. The few Waldenses, or Vaudois, that escaped, took shelter at Geneva ; and Calvin afforded them all the aid and succour in his power.

Osiander, whom we may recollect as uncle to the wife of Cranmer, differed from Calvin in many of his religious opinions. Both were tenacious of their doctrines, and possessed the pertinacity of the age ; but the following passage in one of Calvin's letters to Melancthon shows, that he understood the importance of concord.

"I had feared that you were offended with my admonitions ; but from your letter I have learned most fully, that our union still remains unimpaired ; which certainly ought to be for ever sacred and inviolable, as its origin was from a similar affection for piety. You see how many eyes are turned upon us. The wicked will captiously make of our differences a handle for their reproaches ; and the weak among us be disturbed by our most trivial opposition."

Cranmer and Osiander continued their friendship through life. But Calvin thus speaks of him ;

"That Osiander has withdrawn himself from us, or rather made his escape, is neither a matter of surprise, nor of much regret. He was one of those wild animals that can never be tamed."

Even Melancthon seems to have felt the same disapprobation towards him. It probably required the timid forbearance of Cranmer to endure the violence of his temper. He was one of the first disciples of Luther. With Martyr, Bucer, and Melancthon, Calvin's friendship continued uninterrupted, whatever might have been the difference of their opinions.

The same year that the horrible extermination of the Vaudois took place, the plague began to rage in Geneva. The Calvinists, for they were now distinguished by that name, considered the pestilence a judgment upon those who opposed the Protestant doctrines ; while the Catholics, on the other hand, viewed it as a token of divine displeasure, intended expressly for those who encouraged them. The disease, however, went on, little respecting the opponents. Whole families were swept off, and, added to the horrors of the scene, the avaricious and the profligate were detected in spreading the horrible infection. When discovered, they declared themselves bound, by the most solemn oaths, not to betray each other. Deserted houses, and other abodes made vacant by death, became places of carousal, while theft and vice, in its most disgusting forms, committed far worse ravages than the plague.

CHAPTER III.

SERVETUS AND CALVIN.

THE city of Geneva had scarcely recovered from the effects of the pestilence, when it was threatened with a civil war. Ami Perrin, a man of bold and seditious character, whom Calvin denominated a *mock Cæsar*, had been appointed by the people, Captain-general. His great object, and that of his compeers was, to put down the Calvinists. It is probable that many had become disgusted at the despotic sway of Calvin, and they wished to transfer the church discipline to the Senate. The presbytery stated, that the laws established were consistent with the Word of God. On one occasion there was great danger of bloodshed in the court itself, where the council of two hundred was assembled.

Calvin no sooner understood the danger, than, accompanied by his colleagues, he proceeded to the council-house. They heard, on approaching, loud and confused clamors, which increased with all the signs of sedition. Calvin immediately made his way into the midst of the turbulent and

riotous crowd. His manner was calm and undaunted, and his presence struck them with astonishment. "I have come," said he, with a firm voice, "to oppose my body to your swords. If you are determined to shed blood, I exhort you to begin with mine."

The heat of the contest abated, and Calvin walked to the Senate-Chamber. Here he found an equally violent contest going on. He pressed between the parties, when they were in the act of drawing their swords in the sanctuary of justice. He addressed them in the powerful language of truth, and represented the public evils which must necessarily flow from such factions. His address produced a full effect; and even the seditious commended him for his calm and resolute interposition.

We wish, for the honor of human nature, that the conduct of Calvin had always been thus humane and magnanimous. He had succeeded in establishing a consistorial jurisdiction, with the power of inflicting censures and canonical punishments; and, as he was the head of the church, his authority was absolute. He, who had so loudly declaimed against the tyranny of Rome, was doomed to prove how dangerous an instrument is power in the hands of a human being.

Servetus, who had years before excited his resentment at Paris, still continued to write upon

the Trinity, in an offensive style. He was a physician of uncommon learning, and distinguished for the discovery of the circulation of the blood, which was followed out and established by Harvey. His religious opinions had drawn upon him the extreme indignation of Calvin, and, unfortunately, he passed through Geneva in disguise, on his way to Italy. Calvin discovered that he was there, and caused him to be seized and imprisoned.

We recoil with horror from the condemnation of Servetus. That Calvin was the great instrument of his persecution appears too true, notwithstanding the able defence of his friends. But if we acquit More, and Cranmer, and others, of personal hatred and revenge in similar bloody acts perpetrated for difference of opinion, why should we not do the same by Calvin? "As long as there was any hope of recalling him to a right mind," says Calvin, "I did not cease to afford all my assistance in private to effect it." Cranmer pursued the same course in his conduct towards poor Joan Boucher. Both Servetus and Joan were condemned to the stake; the one in the prime of intelligent manhood, the other in the martyr-fortitude of devoted womanhood.

Whatever may be thought of the theology of Servetus, his discovery of the circulation of the blood, a discovery which the illustrious Harvey

perfected and demonstrated, renders him worthy of undying remembrance, while our veins have a pulse, or our hearts a throb.

This martyr of the Genevese apostle followed the lesson which he had been taught ; he endeavoured, with as sincere a spirit as Calvin, Luther, or Cranmer, to deduce his faith from the Bible ; but, failing to find theirs, he fell a victim to his own. He denied the three persons in the Godhead, and declared that all creatures were of the personal substance of God, and that all things were full of him. When questioned further on the subject, his replies were rude and vehement, according to the spirit of the age, and he seems to have disdained what he considered the bigoted reasonings of Calvin. "This is my general principle," said he ; "all things spring from God, and all nature is the substantial spirit of God."

Calvin, like other sectarians, would have been glad to save the life of Servetus, by forcing him to renounce his opinions, and adopt his own. But, as the prisoner obstinately refused to do this, he thought it just that he should *die*. It was in like manner thought just, during the reign of the gentle Edward the Sixth (though far from him were such cruelties), that John Van Parre should be sentenced to the stake for adopting opinions similar to those of Servetus. Calvin says, "I most earnestly wish Servetus and his faults might sleep." We fully believe this ; it were well for

Calvin if the part he acted could be also forgotten.

Servetus was accused of saying, the soul "was mortal." In his defence, he says ; "If I had said that, or that there exists neither God, justice, or resurrection, or Jesus Christ, or Holy Scriptures ; if I had said that, and written and published it to infect the world, *I should condemn myself to death.* There is no crime or heresy so great as to make the soul mortal."

Calvin married Idolette de Bure, a widow with children, when he was thirty ; she was an Anabaptist whom he converted at Strasburg. The death of his wife took place in 1549, about nine years after their marriage. In the notes to Beza's Life of Calvin, written by an American editor, we find an interesting account of her last moments, in a letter from Calvin to Farel, from which we select passages.

" On Tuesday, all the brethren being present, we united in prayer. In a few words, for she was very feeble, she gave evidence of the state of her mind. As she had not mentioned her children, I was apprehensive that from delicacy she might cherish in her mind an anxiety more painful than disease ; and I declared before the brethren, that I would take the same care of them as if they were my own. She answered, ' I have commended them to the Lord.' When I observed that this did not lessen my obligation

of duty to them, she replied ; ‘ If the Lord takes them under his protection, I know they will be intrusted to your care.’

“ The elevation of her mind was so great, that she appeared to be raised above this world. On the day when she gave up her soul to the Lord, our brother B., a little before six o’clock, opened to her the consolations of the Gospel ; during which she frequently exclaimed, ‘ O glorious resurrection ! God of Abraham and of all our fathers ! The faithful have in so many ages hoped in Thee, and not one has been disappointed ! I will also hope ! ’

“ At six o’clock, I was compelled to leave home. Perceiving her voice begin to falter, she said ; ‘ Let us pray, — let us pray ; pray for me, — for all of you.’ At this time I entered the house. Before eight o’clock, she breathed her last so placidly, that those present could not distinguish the moment which closed her life.”

The death of Francis took place in 1547. Of the three who had filled so wide a space in Europe, and who had so often been friends and enemies, Henry the Eighth, Francis the First, and Charles the Fifth, the Emperor alone remained.* His death occasioned no regret to the Protestants.

* Francis warned his son of the ambition of the Princes of Lorraine, afterwards called the Guises.

He had sufficiently proved his want of faith towards them ; and Calvin, at Geneva, and his adherents in France, entertained hopes that the new King, (the son of Francis,) Henry the Second, might be favorable to the Calvinists ; which sect, notwithstanding the little protection they had received, still increased in France.

The principles of Luther and Zuinglius paved the way for Calvin's. The Swiss reformer was violently opposed by many of the Cantons, though he had been successful in establishing his faith at Zurich. At length they had recourse to arms, and Zuinglius, who had come forward as a leader, was slain in 1531. His followers assumed the name of Sacramentarians.

Before entering upon the reign of Henry the Second, it may be well to introduce some of the prominent actors of the day. France was at that time divided into four parties. The first, perhaps, was that of the Constable Montmorency, who had shared the fate of Francis the First in his imprisonment at the battle of Pavia. Though he was made Constable of France, he afterwards fell into disgrace and was banished from court, but was restored by Henry the Second, immediately on his accession to the throne. The second party was that of the Guises, whose ambition had always been a source of suspicion to Francis, who had communicated his fears to Henry. At

the head of the third party was Diana of Poitiers, Duchess de Valentinois. She was the favorite of the King, though several years older, and governed him by the superiority of her talents, as well as by her beauty. Her influence was all employed in favor of the Catholic cause. The fourth party was that of the Queen, Catharine de Medicis. She was the daughter of Lorenzo de Medicis, Duke of Urbino, and married, in 1534, Henry, Duke of Orleans.

The Constable Montmorency and the Duchess de Valentinois were the only two parties that were at all united ; but Montmorency understood the sort of flattery that wins upon a woman.

It was proposed that Edward the Sixth of England should marry the daughter of Henry, the Princess Elizabeth. This negotiation failed. There was a prospect, however, of a lasting peace with England, which was highly gratifying to the new King, who was now, after an absence of two years, to take possession of the throne, and wished to indulge his natural taste for pagantry and pleasure.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NUPTIALS AND THE TOURNAMENT.

THE accession of the new king was celebrated with great pomp, in 1549. Herald's were despatched to the Emperor of Germany, and to all the European nations with whom Francis was in amity at the time of his death, inviting them to be present at the jousts and tournaments, which were to be held during fifteen days. All true knights, desirous of distinguishing themselves, were invited to seek honor on this glorious occasion, which was to include the coronation of the Queen.

The French nation, easily excited, were all deeply engaged in the approaching festival. Henry had announced, that he should enter the lists both on foot and on horseback. Previously to the tournament, brilliant illuminations and exhibitions were going on. The Seine was for a time the scene of action, and a naval fight, admirably conducted, afforded all Paris what most delighted them, a *spectacle*. All Paris, — alas ! no. The Conciergerie contained its prisoners, men who were convicted of no crime but difference of religious opinion. But they were to be

important actors in the brilliant show. Many of them had been condemned during the reign of Francis, and, with that hope, which seldom forsakes the wretched as long as there is life, they heard the shouts echoing, even to their prison walls, of "Vive le Roi !"

Amidst the general rejoicing, their hearts were kindled anew ; and life, with all its former prospects, returned to them. There was the husband to be reunited to his wife, the father to his children, and the son to his aged parent. As evening approached, they heard the steps of the keepers ; the keys were placed in the doors, and they slowly turned on their hinges.

"Come forth," was the summons ; "the King commands it."

Many a tremulous voice uttered "Vive le Roi !" It was already dark ; and new illuminations were wanting, and new spectacles, to keep alive the interest of the Court. The prisoners soon learned that they were to assist at the *fête*. But how ? As it grew darker, the piles blazed high ; and, at various parts of the city, scaffolds were seen, casting their huge and dark shadows on the multitude around them. The Place de Grève, the Place Moubert, the porch of Notre Dame, and the Rue St. Antoine, selected for the tournaments, were the chosen spots.

The new King and Queen had gladdened the

sight of their subjects through the day, dressed in their coronation robes. Glittering with diamonds, exhausting nature and art for pleasures and luxuries, they rode through the streets. But an evening exhibition was wanting, and Henry himself had the credit of inventing it. The prisoners had been reserved for the finishing honor of the ceremonies. The Protestants were conducted to the different scaffolds. New shouts of "Vive le Roi!" resounded from the populace, as Henry approached. But only shrieks were heard from the unhappy victims. These grew fainter and fainter, till the last agony had passed; the excitement ceased, and the King and courtiers passed on to another place of execution!

In 1551, Henry committed depredations on the ecclesiastical territories; and as, like his father, he was desirous of removing all suspicions of want of zeal for the Catholic religion, he determined to settle matters by persecuting anew the Calvinists. For this purpose, he issued the "Edict of Chateaubriand."

Nothing could be more severe than this ordinance. The civil and ecclesiastical courts were required to unite for the extirpation of heresy, and high rewards of benefices, &c., were offered to informers. Those who ventured to intercede for heretics, let their relations be ever so near, were to be considered as heretics themselves. The

property of all Protestants was to be confiscated. The informer, who could prove that any money had been forwarded to Geneva by a subject of France, was to be entitled to a third of it. Every book, of every sort, imported from Geneva, or any other town separated from the Romish communion, was prohibited, under pain of fine and corporal punishment. The police of Paris and Lyons were ordered constantly to inspect book-sellers' shops and all printing-offices. In short, every avenue of liberty was guarded with a jealousy, that called forth the united efforts of human ingenuity.

Strange as it might seem at the time, though now a truth well known, creeds flourish with new vigor under persecution. Nothing is more fatal to perseverance, than inglorious ease. The Reformation spread in France amidst tortures and executions. The Calvinists began to form themselves into a body, and at length elected Ferrière Maligni chief of the party. His zeal in the cause of the Reformation led him to organize a body secretly, resembling the model of Geneva; ministers, deacons, and elders. We cannot understand how such a society could exist in Paris, under the edict of Chateaubriand. Probably there must have been found some Protestants among the magistrates and other public officers, that were in-

terested in concealing it.* Nor must we forget the secret influence that Margaret of Navarre continued to exercise by her virtues and near relationship to the throne, being aunt to the present King.

The Duchess d'Estampes was consistent only in her opposition to the Catholic religion. During the life of Francis, she had entered into a secret correspondence with the Emperor, to place the Duke of Orleans, brother of the Dauphin, on the throne. After the death of Francis, some dissatisfaction between herself and her husband, compelled her to retire to her country-seat. Upon the whole, the Protestants had little cause to exult in her patronage. She was a woman without virtue or honor.

Humanly speaking, it is only to subordinate influences that we can attribute the growth of the Reformation at this time. The success of Ferrière Maligni's endeavours was soon known in other places, and churches were formed in the same manner.

We come now to a new era in the Protestant

* No sooner was the Parliament intrusted with the charge, than the Protestants experienced a favorable change in their condition. There were good men amongst them, and the rigor of ecclesiastical law was suspended by the civil. The edict, therefore, operated in a manner exactly the reverse of what was intended.

world. Gaspard de Coligni was made Admiral of France, for his bravery at the battles of Cerisoles and Renti. He was a man of generous and noble disposition, and early became initiated in the doctrines of Calvin. Nicholas Durand, a knight of Malta, and Vice-Admiral of Brittany, had coasted the shores of South America, and was well acquainted with Brazil. Hitherto his ambition had been disappointed, but his spirit was not broken; new schemes came to his aid, and he proposed to Coligni planting a Protestant colony on the shores of South America.

Coligni, whose zeal for the new religion was honest and sincere, entered at once into his plans, and represented to the King that the most important results might ensue to France, by establishing a colony in Brazil. Henry, who thought it time for some of this foreign wealth to flow into his coffers, embraced the plan, and supplied them with funds. Durand collected as many Protestants as were willing to join the expedition, and they sailed for the coast of America full of ardent and enthusiastic hopes. He first disembarked three hundred people on an island in the Rio Janeiro. The climate answered their sanguine expectations, and, on their first arrival, they wrote home glowing accounts, urging their friends to come out, and, above all, female missionaries.

Calvin received these accounts with perfect

confidence, and used all his influence in persuading the good and well-intentioned to join the colonists. Many in Geneva gave up their cheerful and established homes, to spread the religion of Jesus Christ in its purity abroad. Others gladly left Paris, Lyons, and different parts of France, to worship in security according to their faith.

Durand had cloaked his true character, and it was not till they were completely in his power, that he began to discover how little the reformed religion, or any other, influenced his motives. He had obtained the footing he wanted, had a large sum of money at his command, and cared but little what became of his colony. The good were a hindrance to his schemes, which were now to unite himself to the strongest party, and acquire personal influence and wealth.

The disappointed colonists had but one wish, and that was to return. To this, Durand consented, offering them an old vessel, that seemed hardly able to breast the ocean. Some refused to go in her ; others, more sanguine, embarked. After enduring the greatest hardships, from want of provisions and water, they at last landed at a place recommended to them by Durand, who had furnished them with a large packet of sealed letters, which, he said, would secure to them every aid they might want.

One of the venerable missionaries was appoint-

ed to deliver them to the proper authorities. They were opened and read. "Do you know what these papers contain?" was the first question asked. "You are denounced as heretics, and your immediate execution is recommended, as agreeing with the King's edict."

The authorities were not disposed to follow such perfidious counsel; on the contrary, they contributed relief to the miserable sufferers, and enabled them once more to seek their native country, and tell the tale of Durand's treachery. Some years after, news arrived that the fort he had established was destroyed, the island captured, and all hope of its becoming a colony of France dissipated.

Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, abdicated his throne in favor of Philip, and retired to a monastery. He died in 1558. After his death a truce of five years was concluded between France and Spain. But this, in fact, was merely to give the two monarchs, Henry and Philip, time to fortify themselves for new combats.

Charles had always been an enemy to the Protestant cause, from the struggles of Luther to the present day; and, though the Protestants in France were not much affected by his death, it can hardly be passed over without mention.

Henry soon found that his famous edict of Chateaubriand was multiplying Calvinists, and a new method of persecution was devised. Mat-

thew Orri, a Dominican monk, was appointed Inquisitor in France, and had full authority to search out heretics. Four hundred Protestants were assembled, one evening, to hear a sermon and receive the sacrament. Besides these, many were present from curiosity. The simplicity of their worship, divested of all the trappings and ceremonies of Rome, had its novelty. They were fervent and sincere, and profound silence was observed by the audience till the service was over. But when the doors were opened, and the Calvinists attempted to retire, they were attacked by a volley of stones. Most of them were secured as prisoners. To the astonishment of the magistrates, persons of the highest family connexions were found among them, and ladies of the palace. They were tried, and, owing to powerful intercession, only five of the leading members were condemned to be burned !

The truce with Spain was soon broken, and war again commenced between the two monarchs. In the new war Montmorency was taken prisoner at the battle of St. Quentin. Coligni acquired much honor by delaying the enemy seventeen days before the ramparts of St. Quentin, though it was eventually lost. The Duke of Guise arrived from Italy with his army, and prevented the Spaniards from pursuing their victory. As a reward for this service, his brothers, the

Cardinal of Lorraine, the Cardinal of Bourbon, and the Cardinal of Chatillon, were appointed Inquisitors-general, with power to inflict capital punishment on all persons found guilty of heresy. The Parliament mitigated the severity as far as possible, by allowing all laymen to appeal from this tribunal.

In 1558 the nuptials of the Dauphin were to be celebrated with Mary, Queen of Scotland. This naturally assembled a brilliant collection of nobility. Among them were the Guises, her uncles, whose ambition had made the alliance ; also the Bourbons, who had long been depressed by royal coldness, and who attended the nuptials as a matter of etiquette. Mary, scarcely beyond the age of infancy, gave evidence of the beauty and grace for which she was afterwards so distinguished.

The ceremonies of the occasion were listlessly performed ; there was but little hilarity and less heart exhibited ; and after they were over, and the King had withdrawn from the capital, many princes of the blood, with their consorts, joined a solemn Protestant procession through the Faubourg St. Germain, in which nearly four thousand of the people chanted hymns and psalms.

The *Prè-aux-clercs* was one of the most frequented promenades in Paris. To this, the students of the University generally resorted. They

were young men, full of chivalric ardor, and eager to demonstrate and defend all the principles they adopted. The majority of them had embraced the Calvinistic doctrines, and were urged by their leader to an open profession of them. The monks of the Abbey St. Victor at length determined to prevent their assembling.

Nothing could exceed the strange spectacle, which was not confined to argument, or even to loud voices and impatient gestures. Several battles were fought on the spot, between the monks, dressed in their gowns and cowls, and the students, who, as might be expected, gained the victory.

This victory, which the young conquerors celebrated by simple and sacred music,* returning thanks to God, who had given power to their weak arms, excited great enthusiasm throughout Paris. Many persons of the highest rank came forward, and declared themselves Protestants. Among these, were the two brothers, Antony of Bourbon (in right of his wife, King of Navarre,) and Louis, Prince of Condé.

* The Psalms, translated into French metre by Clement Marot, were set to music by Louis Guadimel, and became extremely popular in the saloons of Paris, and at the palace of the Louvre. It is said, that they greatly aided the Protestant cause, and induced people to read the Scriptures, from which the beautiful poetry was drawn, that so much charmed their imaginations.

There is something irresistibly taking in the enthusiasm of youth. The gathering at the Prè-aux-clercs became the great object of attention. Games, dances, and all public exhibitions were given up for this. The evil, as it was considered by the Catholics, increased to a most alarming degree. The assembling was denounced as seditious, and serious measures were determined on for preventing it.

It was thought necessary for the royal authority to interfere. The King himself went in person among the Counsellors, thereby forming what was called a *bed of justice*, who had assembled in Parliament in the Convent of the Augustins. The Counsellors were then framing laws respecting the Protestants ; some of them decidedly favorable. The King desired that he might not disconcert them, and requested them to speak openly and candidly. Thus urged, many spoke their true sentiments ; but none so boldly as Dubourg Faur. Henry listened calmly ; and when he took his departure, he made a motion to the Count Montgomery, captain of his Scotch Guards, who immediately arrested him, with three others, and conducted them to prison.

The arrest of these Counsellors was followed by that of all known heretics. Henry resolved, that the reformed religion should be exterminated from the kingdom. He declared, that not one Prot-

estant should be left. He styled himself the Minister of Vengeance, and only waited till the tournament was over, in honor of his daughter's marriage, to kindle new fires, and immolate new victims.

Letters were written to Calvin from his converts, in which they declared that all was lost !

On the morning of 1559, the tournament commenced. The sun shone brilliantly on the armour of the knights. The beautiful Diana, though past the season of youth, was still full of captivation, and graced the scene by her presence. Henry felt her power, without comprehending the ligaments that bound him. Her smile was applause to him, and he little suspected that it was often one of scorn. But intellect is confined to no rank or sex, and the Duchess ruled the king for her own purposes.

The Fauxbourg St. Antoine, the scene of exhibition, was thronged. The four champions, were the King, the Prince of Ferrara, the Duke of Guise, and the Duke de Nemours. The King came off conqueror with every combatant. The courtiers were too well bred to aim at victory. Flowers were scattered in the King's path, and wreaths suspended over his head. Perhaps, in the midst of all this success, some thought of the Protestants might cross his mind ; probably, however, it was only to exult in the decided

measures he had taken to extirpate them from the kingdom.

Intoxicated with his victories, and proud of exhibiting his prowess before Diana, he suddenly called upon Montgomery to appear in the lists, and take one of the lances.

Montgomery, though expert in arms, made a thousand excuses. The King would accept of none, and even insinuated that Montgomery was afraid of losing the reputation he had gained.

They met ; and the King furiously rushed upon his antagonist, and shivered the lance of Montgomery. A splinter of it entered the King's eye, and he fell. He was carried to the Palace of Tournelles, and expired eleven days afterwards, in 1559, in the forty-first year of his age. The Protestants considered his death a judgment. Montgomery had arrested Dubourg by the King's order, and the King had now fallen by the lance of Montgomery !

When the death of Mary Tudor, Queen of England, was announced in France, Mary Stuart, who had been married to Francis, the Dauphin, a few months before, by the direction of her uncles, the Dukes of Guise, assumed the title and arms of Queen of England. She was the granddaughter of Margaret, Queen of Scotland, who was Henry the Eighth's eldest sister. But the Court of France was not in a situation to maintain her

rights, and they contented themselves with this show of hereditary claim.

Fifteen months after the Dauphin's marriage, the death of Henry the Second took place, and Francis the Second was called to the throne. The sudden death of Henry had prevented his making any arrangements for his numerous family. Catharine de Medicis, his wife, had borne him ten children. Four sons and three daughters survived their father. The eldest, Francis the Second, was but fifteen years old, his health delicate, and his disposition inactive and feeble. His mother, Catharine, daughter of Lorenzo de Medicis, was, at the time of her husband's death, thirty-nine years old. For twenty six years she had lived at the court of France. Her husband had treated her with indifference, devoting himself to Diana, Duchess de Valentinois. Catharine was early taught the arts of dissimulation, which she afterwards practised so successfully. She lived in apparent harmony with her rival during the King's life. Montmorency had treated her with rudeness, and given base counsels to the King. All this she suffered with patience, and behaved towards her faithless consort like an enduring wife. Born without that tenderness of heart, which often makes a woman the sport of circumstances, her whole life was one of calculation. She immediately reflected upon her situa-

tion, and determined to join the party of the Guises ; by that means, uniting her cause to her son's, and that of his lovely and engaging wife.

The Constable Montmorency, after Henry's death, proposed to Catharine their uniting in the same cause. He offered her his own personal influence, and that of his sons, and three nephews, the Cardinal de Chatillon, Coligni, Admiral of France, and Dandelot, Colonel-General of the Infantry. After the battle of St. Quentin, while they were prisoners, they had become acquainted with the Bible, and from that time, they favored the doctrines of reform.

The princes of the blood were all of the Bourbon race. Antony, by his marriage with Jane d'Albret, who was cousin to the King, had acquired the title of King of Navarre, and the sovereignty of Bearn. His brother Charles was Archbishop of Rouen, and Cardinal de Bourbon. The third brother was Louis, Prince de Condé. His person, though small, was pleasing ; he was impetuous and full of courage, but his fortune was narrow, and he possessed no fiefs or distinguished places. All the princes, except the Cardinal, inclined to the reformed religion ; their wives were deeply interested in what they considered the true faith, but their husbands were ac-

cused of being influenced more by ambition than conscience.

The Guises had already begun to exert their influence over Francis, even while Montmorency was watching the lifeless remains of the King. When he repaired to the court, he was told, that, owing to his advanced age, he might have permission to retire. The King of Navarre, with the Bourbon brothers, arrived at court, and on all of them were conferred foreign offices, evidently to remove them from the scene of royalty.

The triumph of the Guises in the formation of the court-cabinet, and the removal of the Bourbons, with the close union of Catharine to the Catholic party, filled the Calvinists with despair. The Queen-mother had appeared to favor the Protestants, but now they beheld her join their most bitter persecutors, the Guises.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSPIRACY.

FRANCIS THE SECOND was devotedly attached to his young queen, Mary of Scotland, and readily transferred to her uncles of Guise and Lorraine, the care and dignity of the kingdom. The fair Diana had lost with Henry her only friend, and the rivalry, which had so long existed between her and Catharine, was at last terminated.

The outward complacency, with which Catharine had borne the infringement of her rights, and which covered her secret hatred, was, perhaps, her first lesson in duplicity. This was no longer necessary. The estates of the Duchess were confiscated, and the Queen-mother took possession even of her jewels.

Montmorency, perceiving that his presence was unwelcome, accepted the permission to retire from court. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, however unjust they might consider this conduct, were disposed to remain pacific. But not so the nephews of the Consta-

ble. Coligni, the Admiral, and D'Andelot, determined to humble the Guises, and soon won Condé to their measures. They were all favorable to the Reformation, and they resolved to place themselves at the head of a religious party.

It was expected that Dubourg would be released from prison, on the death of Henry. Many supposed that the King's death, by the lance of Montmorency, was a judgment of God, for his cruel proceedings. It was soon known, however, that this excellent and upright man was condemned to die. Catharine de Medicis was at that time believed to be secretly inclined to the Protestant cause. She had cultivated an intimacy with the Dame du Roye (mother of the princess de Condé), and the friendship of the Admiral Coligni. A petition was sent to her by the reformed party, entreating her to save the guiltless Dubourg, and to use her influence with the King to spare his life.

"Ah," said Catharine, "sentiments of mercy are in unison with a woman's heart." As she spoke, her tears fell. "Be assured," continued she, "nothing shall be wanting on my part. But let me caution you not to heighten the present excitement by congregating in numbers; but employ the utmost caution in all your proceedings. It is my wish to confer with one of the most respectable of your ministers." She then named a

day, on which such a one might be privately introduced to her closet. The day arrived, and the minister took his station as directed ; but Catharine, either by accident or design, did not make her appearance.

Every measure was resorted to, to save Dubourg from death. Merillac, his friend, extorted from him a promise of silence during his trial, and then made an apology for him, which Dubourg wholly disclaimed. He was conducted to the place of execution. His last words were, " Father, abandon me not ; neither will I abandon thee ! "

" Thus perished, in his thirty-eighth year," says an historian, " Ann Dubourg, a man of rare talents, and yet rarer integrity ; loved, wept, and honored, even by many of those who differed from him most widely in religion."

Soon after this event, the King of Navarre made a visit to his nephew, Francis the Second. He was received coldly, and, from many real or imaginary affronts put upon him, it was evident, that all power was in possession of the Duke of Guise and Cardinal Lorraine.

France was, at this time, filled with converts to the new doctrines. They wanted only a leader to organize them into a formidable body. Calvin asserted, as Cranmer had done before, that the law of the King was supreme. But the

French Calvinists reasoned, that the King, being yet in his minority, was to be protected by his subjects from the tyranny of the Guises ; and the Prince of Condé was unanimously elected chief. The plan was ably laid ; the Prince was not to be known as a participator, till the time of action arrived, and the insurrection actually took place. In the mean time, John de Bari, Sieur de La Renaudie, was to direct the plot.

The meeting was to be held at Nantes. They assembled in the darkness of the night in a ruined building on the outskirts of the town. La Renaudie administered solemn oaths, that nothing should be done against the King, the Queen-mother, or the princes his brothers. They all swore to this agreement, and parted with embraces and tears. The time and place of carrying their plot into execution, was to be on the fifteenth of March, at Blois.

It is deeply to be lamented that such a conspiracy was formed. Had their religion been suffered gradually to grow, it would have done so under persecution ; but it had now taken the side of disloyalty, and, though the Guises were the professed objects, a conspiracy against the King was the first embodied act of Protestantism in France. They were now about to give a just cause for reprehension to all Europe ;—to place themselves on the side of the guilty, instead of the injured.

Many of the noblesse had joined the party of Condé. The King of Navarre, either from natural timidity or prudence, still continued unwilling. The Constable Montmorency absolutely refused; he had never embraced the new doctrines, and wanted the zeal which actuated the Reformers. Coligni is said to have positively rejected any part in the conspiracy; it is supposed he was ignorant of it.

During this time, the Cardinal Lorraine, one of the three Inquisitors, who had already made himself sufficiently odious, being pressed by duns, ordered all sorts of petitioners to quit Fontainebleau, where the Court then was held. They took him at his word; and the noblesse were so much disgusted with this piece of arrogance and assumption that they immediately retired; and the brilliant drawing-rooms became deserted.

The young King, whose ill health had rendered him an object of compassion to every one, found his principal solace and amusement in the society of his accomplished queen. Her harp often soothed the restlessness engendered by painful disease; and, though flattered and worshipped wherever she appeared, she willingly gave up the admiration of the public, and devoted herself to her royal husband. Her hair, which was uncommonly beautiful, curled in natural ringlets. At that time low caps were worn, and,

as a matter of fashion, were considered regal. Francis disliked this covering of the hair, and Mary threw it aside. He delighted to hear the tones of her voice, in singing, speaking, or reading ; and often, when sleep fled from his pillow, Mary would patiently lean over him, and lure the truant back by low chants, or the touching music of her own Scotch ballads. This was the queen who was afterwards arraigned for the murder of Darnley, her husband ! It may be so, for who can tell what effect corrupting circumstances may produce. Early separated from her mother, placed under the training of a licentious court and ambitious uncles, her gentle and generous affections still flourished ; but that firm and unyielding principle, that elevation of character, which is strengthened and developed by judicious education, was hardly to be acquired. Ages have passed since her doom was pronounced, yet no one can revert to it without fulfilling her own prediction ;

“ And when I am cold in the tomb,
Some hearts will yet sorrow for me.”

The state of the King's health made it necessary that his residence should be changed, and he was ordered to Blois for a milder atmosphere. What was the astonishment of himself and his court, as they approached the place, to find it de-

sented ! Instead of being met by an enthusiastic populace, eager to show honor to their young monarch, — instead of crowded balconies and windows, — all was stillness and desolation, and scarcely an object to be seen.

As the King gazed from his litter, he perceived a woman flying before them, with an infant in her arms. There was such an appearance of terror in her movements that he ordered one of his attendants to overtake her. She dropped on her knees, and implored mercy for her infant, with shrieks of despair. The cause of the desertion of the place was soon discovered. It had been announced, that the King's disease was leprosy, and that the physicians had ordered for him a daily bath of infants' blood !

In the present age we can scarcely credit the belief of such a foolish story. But we must remember the despotism of the times, and the character of the French peasantry. Pretended emissaries from the royal household had circulated it, and collected lists of the number of infants suitable for slaughter.

The Guises attributed the report to the Protestants. One of the culprits was seized, and he declared that he had acted under the orders of Cardinal Lorraine. Such an assertion is hardly a proof that so detestable a report was seriously fabricated by any person. Probably it was one

of those idle and foolish stories, that are engendered in all ages, but in more enlightened ones are laughed at and despised, and only used by either party for political purposes.

The plan of the conspirators was, to seize the King's person at Blois, place him in security, beyond the power of the Court, and get rid of the Guises in the speediest and most effectual manner.

The change of air at Blois, had produced salutary effects upon Francis's health, and once more the courtiers who surrounded him began to devise amusements and *fêtes*. The castle of Blois, in which Louis the Eleventh was born, is situated on an eminence, which affords a view of the country round, and of the magnificent Loire flowing at its foot. Here Francis resided with his Court. As he walked upon the ramparts with his young queen, he seemed to inhale new vigor. Youth is full of hope, and they both looked forward to scenes of regal splendor. For the first time, the King expressed some doubts of the real affection of the Guises, and an earnest desire for the time to arrive when he might lawfully govern his own empire. Mary, too, talked of her native land, spoke of the heath-covered hills of old Scotia, and many a legend, that she had gathered from her attendants.

She had formed a picturesque view of her

kingdom, and it contrasted admirably with the vine-clad hills of sunny France. Suddenly the Duke of Guise joined them.

"A fair morning," said he, "for the hopes of France. What says my royal cousin and his consort to a hunting-party to-day?"

A ready acquiescence was given, and the court-yard was immediately crowded with horses, hunters, and hounds. The King and Queen, drawn in a light carriage (light for those days) by spirited steeds, were soon surrounded by the hunters, composing not only the nobility of the court, but most of its dependents.

When far from the walls of Blois, the Duke of Guise informed the King, that a hunting-party was but a pretence for removing him from that place. That his faithful friends had received positive information, that the Protestants had entered into a league to capture his royal person; and, as Blois was an unfortified town, the court was to be removed to Amboise.

Francis expressed displeasure that any duplicity had been used towards him, and said, pointedly; "It is so difficult now to distinguish friends from enemies, that, perhaps, it had been better for us to remain at Blois."

The Duke replied, that "he had acted from the truest motives of tenderness, fearing that any uncommon agitation might injure him in his present state of health."

“ True,” said the King with feeling, “ what can be more injurious or painful, than to see one’s self an object of party hatred and contention ! ”

Without further opposition, he proceeded to the castle of Amboise, and was surrounded by his Court, and the partisans of the Duke, who had sent them summons to repair immediately to Amboise.

As yet, the Guises had no definite or precise information on the subject of the conspiracy ; but they were fully convinced that one was formed, and had but little doubt that the Prince of Condé was the head. Of Coligni, too, they had strong suspicions ; but dared not proceed openly against either. Coligni had not withdrawn from the court, and maintained friendly intercourse with Catharine de Medicis. The Guises employed her to discover what she could from the Admiral. As yet, this woman, whose name has become so famous in the annals of Protestantism, had acted only a subordinate part in the politics of France.

Coligni protested his ignorance of any conspiracy, but frankly acknowledged, that he believed there was much disaffection among the reformed party ; and though, for his own part, he was a firm adherer to the Court, from policy, as well as humanity, he would recommend an edict annulling all prosecutions for heresy.

To this day, it seems to be a doubt, whether Coligni was admitted to the confidence of the conspirators ; and historians give different opinions on the subject. His avowed principles as a Sacramentarian would be sufficient to direct suspicions towards him, and still more the aid he had given to Durand, in endeavouring to plant a colony in Rio Janeiro.

The day now approached on which the attack was to be made. Condé was not to appear in it, but to be on the spot to meet the conspirators. La Renaudie was to be the leader of the attack. The King's removal from Blois to Amboise had delayed it several days, as Amboise was, in consequence, to be the object of attack.

The evening before the day, the conspirators met, and Condé, true to his word, was among them. The plan was arranged for him to enter the castle as usual, while Renaudie surprised them without.

Many of the Protestants, no doubt, considered their present undertaking as a holy war, a crusade for the true faith ; but we cannot forget how much hatred and rivalry existed between the Guises and the Bourbons. This last meeting, however, wore the appearance of a religious convention. The voice of prayer was heard from the lips of venerable ministers, and on the stillness of the night fell low strains of solemn music.

Suddenly, the atmosphere became dense and heavy, the wind arose, and the Loire, upon which they were encamped, rushed furiously along, blending its wild murmurs with the rising tempest. The torches of the leaguers glared on their pale faces, in which fatigue and anxiety were depicted, but no fear or irresolution. Condé walked amidst them with a proud step and an undaunted air. "To-morrow!" he exclaimed. "To-morrow!" was reëchoed again and again. Then, mounting his horse, he rode towards the castle of Amboise, far outstripping his attendants.

The holy strain of music had ceased, and all within the encampment were silent; some engaged in prayer on bended knees, others sinking, from fatigue, upon their arms, and wrapped in slumber. But the elements were not hushed; the rain descended in torrents, the wind howled among the trees, and the Loire, as if impatient of restraint, rose high above its banks. If a voice spoke to the conspirators, it was not still and low, but came in the whirlwind and the tempest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COUNCIL AT ORLEANS.

THE next morning the Prince of Condé entered the castle of Amboise. The unusual number of sentinels, and the warlike appearance it wore, struck him with dismay. He was received with great apparent cordiality by the Duke of Guise and the courtiers, and immediately informed that a dangerous plot against the King had been discovered. They rejoiced that he had arrived to aid them by his counsel, valor, and loyalty. Condé was obliged to carry on the farce ; he pretended great indignation, and begged to have some post of danger allotted to him, in which he might assist in defending the castle. This was accordingly done ; but he was surrounded by spies, who watched every movement, and, under the form of courtesy, he was in fact a prisoner.

At about noon, the Protestants began the attack. The situation of the Prince may be imagined, as he saw his party defeated, La Renaudie killed, and the Baron de Castelnau and other chiefs imprisoned. Among those captured was

the secretary of La Renaudie, who, upon refusing to confess what he knew of his master's accomplices, was put to the torture. He then declared that Condé was at the head of the conspiracy, and that their intention had been to murder the King, his brothers, and the Guises.

The King was no sooner informed of this confession, than he sent for Condé, and accused him of the base design. Fortunately, the charge of intended murder swallowed up every other. The Prince demanded a full inquiry ; and, turning to the Duke of Guise, said with heat ; " If there were any present who dared to repeat the slander, he would meet them sword in hand." The Duke of Guise immediately stepped forward, and declared that he would join the Prince of Condé in refuting such an odious charge, and requested to be his second. This stroke of policy, for such it undoubtedly was, astonished all present, and none more than Condé himself. Some attributed it to the counsels of the Queen-mother. The generosity of the Duke to his greatest enemy was much extolled. The King suffered the accusation to drop, and Condé retired to his own chateau, after being obliged to witness some of the terrible executions which followed this injudicious conspiracy.

The appointment of Michael de l'Hôpital as successor to Chancellor Olivier, was said

to be owing to the influence of Catharine. He was earnest to establish peace in the kingdom, and proposed to the King to assemble a national council at Fontainebleau for regulating the theological disputes. The King consented. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé took no notice of the summons. Coligni, who, if apprized of the conspiracy, does not appear to have joined in it, assembled his friends and followers, to the number of about nine hundred, and, appearing at the council, bent one knee to the King, and presented a memorial to him, containing a petition from the inhabitants of Normandy, into whose discontents he had been commissioned to inquire.

While the petitioners in this memorial professed their loyalty and obedience, and their readiness to give their money and shed their blood for the cause of their country, they boldly asserted their right of liberty of opinion on religious subjects. They stated, that they had been accused of meeting *secretly*; that, to their sorrow be it said, this was the only way in which they could offer their worship to God according to their own faith; and they now supplicated his Majesty to allow them churches, and freedom of religious service.

This bold and unexpected demand excited great commotion in the council. Menthic, Bishop of Valence, made an able and eloquent

speech, full of truth and justice towards the Protestants, and representing them as composed not of a vulgar faction, but of men willing to suffer, and every day suffering, excruciating deaths for their faith. "Even if my order and profession," said he, "did not bind me to protest against the effusion of blood, and the severity of criminal punishment in matters concerning faith, I would humbly urge it as a matter of policy, and request you to look to experience in confirmation of what I say. When, in the history of the world, did penal laws ever restrain the progress of religious doctrines? When, on the contrary, did not the patience of those who suffer for them, raise unnumbered partisans to their cause? Many, who would never have heard of the doctrine, when they see men die for it, become convinced, and resolve to die for it themselves." Coligni followed the wise Bishop de Menthic, and urged the petition.

The Cardinal of Lorraine, who, we must remember, was chief Inquisitor, immediately arose, and addressed the audience in a sharp and sarcastic attack upon the Protestants. "The docility, the meekness," he said, "which animated these *perfect Christians*, these *new evangelicals*, might be judged by the flood of libels they had poured upon himself; that for his own part, having collected no less than twenty-two scandalous writings

against his *single self*, he carefully preserved them as badges of honor ;" he added, that, " though he pitied the ignorant who were misled, extreme measures ought to be taken against those who carried arms without permission from the King."

Soon after, a new order was issued for a general council, and Condé was particularly summoned, with the King of Navarre, both of whom had neglected the summons at Fontainebleau. The timid disposition of the latter disposed him to peace, as he was constantly invaded by Spain, and required the aid of Francis. The Prince of Condé, on the other hand, knew not the meaning of the word *fear* through his sensations. Confident in his own powers and illustrious rank, he determined to appear before the assembly in concert with his brother of Navarre.

Orleans was chosen as the place of meeting of the council. The King ordered all the Protestants to resign their arms. The place was thronged with those of the new faith. The Prince of Condé had endeavoured to keep his intentions concealed from his Princess, who was most tenderly attached to him, and justly feared that his courage and boldness would one day cost him his life. The King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were to take their departure from Bearn. Theodore Beza, the Genevan reformer and histori-

an of Calvin, was to accompany them to Nerac, and then to return home to Geneva.

The day arrived on which they were to leave the castle. Orders had been given the night before, that the Princess should not be disturbed, and all was quietly and secretly conducted. At an early hour of the morning, the Bourbon brothers, with the venerable Beza, were ready to depart.

The Princess had suspected their intention, and resolved to make one more effort to counteract it. She entered the hall as they were about to depart, and flung her arms round her husband, conjuring him to relinquish his rash purpose. "Do not," said she, "think I speak to you the doting language of a mere woman ; I have secret and convincing intelligence, that, if you enter Orleans, you are lost ! I do not conjure you to give up your purpose by my true and constant love, neither from your tenderness to your children, but by the holy Protestant league you have joined ! Spare yourself for the cause of God. You have buckled on your sword and shield, not in defence of your own rights, but for the suffering Protestants. Their lives are lost with yours ! Think of the rivers of blood that will flow when they are no longer protected by their noble leader !"

The Prince was for a moment subdued, as he

pressed his wife to his wildly beating heart. The King of Navarre saw the struggle ; he had before repented himself of his daring purpose. " My noble sister is right," said he ; " let us, Louis, renounce this hazardous enterprise, in which our lives are too surely perilled."

Condé might have yielded to the language of his wife ; but that of fear, only gave him new ardor. " See you not, my wife," said he, " that the secret intelligence which you have received, is from our mortal enemies the Guises ? Take courage ! the very fear they entertain of my appearance at Orleans, is the strongest guaranty of my safety. The Queen-mother is friendly to us, and detests the Guises ; and her influence with the King is every day increasing. Seek not to diminish my resolution ; give me your prayers and one parting kiss. Farewell."

Condé rushed from her presence, and, a few moments after, the sound of his horses' feet were heard ringing upon the marble pavement, as he issued from the gate-way. Navarre, ashamed of the irresolution he had discovered, and perhaps equally so of the motives he had urged, slowly followed, accompanied by Theodore Beza, who only stayed to give his parting prayers to the Princess and her household.

The Princess retired, not to weep, but to pray, — to commend her husband to the God of the

faithful. She was a warm friend to the reformed religion, and intimately leagued in opinion with Jane of Navarre. Her attachment to the Prince partook of the ardor of her disposition, and, though sometimes conscious of wrongs, suspicion never weakened it.

Soon after the departure of Navarre and Condé, they were met by an officer of the King, who said that he was sent to command them not to travel on the high roads or through fortified places. Warnings poured in upon them as they proceeded, and intelligence arrived from Normandy, entreating them to hasten there, and avoid the snares of the enemy. The King of Navarre was wholly disheartened, and, feigning sickness, declared himself unable to continue his march. But it was now too late to return. Six hundred foot soldiers, and two hundred lancers, awaited them at Poitiers as a pretended guard of honor; and Navarre, after a delay of a few days, was compelled to proceed.

Thus escorted, they approached Orleans. The gates of the palace were closed, and, though at length they were unbarred, Condé had previously entered on foot. They were met with the utmost coldness, and guarded by officers of the court. The King, attended by the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine received them in the audience chamber, but motioned them to proceed to the closet of the Queen-mother.

When Catharine saw the Prince of Condé, she burst into tears ; a degree of emotion, that was not uncommon to her when she contemplated the victims of her treachery. Condé appeared perfectly calm when the King informed him, that he was accused of treason. "My object, Sire," said he, "is to prove the falsehood of such an assertion."

"You shall have a fair trial," said the King, sternly ; and left him alone with Catharine.

The Queen-mother seems to have been divided in her interest. She dreaded the influence of the Guises when in power, and favored the Bourbons when in disgrace. Had her motives been generous, this conduct might have been considered noble ; but it was well understood, that she wished to keep the balance even, till she might wholly decide it. Yet she discovered compunction at the sight of Condé, sensible that she had induced him to come. She spoke words of encouragement to him, and promised to use all her influence with her son to give a favorable decision.

Condé replied, that he thought not of himself. "My life I would set at any odds," said he, "for the sake of the Protestants. My brother of Navarre risks far more than I do ; he risks a crown and a kingdom."

As he left the presence of Catharine, and

passed through the gallery, an attendant of the palace beckoned him to follow her, and conducted him to the presence of Mary. The beautiful consort of the King was seated on a throne slightly raised, her hair dressed with rich pearls, and her countenance beaming with animation.

"I have a surprise for you, brave Prince of Condé," said she, pointing to a lady who stood veiled at her feet.

The lady removed her veil, and the Princess of Condé met the astonished view of her husband.

"Ah, Louis," she exclaimed, "could you believe that I would suffer my fate to be separated from yours? I have travelled day and night, and, owing to the illness of Navarre, arrived before you."

"She has secured a warm friend," said Mary, "in her Queen, and our noble mother will aid us in your cause."

In the course of the day, notwithstanding these flattering appearances, Condé was arrested as a prisoner, and all communication cut off between himself, his wife, and his brother. Numerous arrests followed, including that of his mother, the Dame du Roye; the King of Navarre, though not arrested, was placed under a strong guard; and it was probably owing to the Queen's influence, that the Princess of Condé was suffered to remain in

the palace and at liberty, though she could not gain permission to see her husband.

Measures were immediately taken for the trial of the Prince. De Thou, father of the historian of those times, was President of the Council. Condé protested, that no trial of a prince of the blood was legal, unless by the King and peers. This representation was not regarded, and the trial proceeded. He was adjudged guilty, and sentenced to lose his head !

It is probable much of the accusation rested upon his intentions of personal violence to the King and the Guises, as some of the most respectable members were reluctant to sign the sentence, and delayed till the last. One nobleman, a Roman Catholic, and a warm friend of the Guises, said to the King ; " Any other service which your Majesty may command, I will perform while I have life ; but I will sooner lay my head on the block for the executioner, than subscribe to an act like this against the royal blood." The Princess of Condé threw herself at the feet of the King, and besought his mercy. Mary joined her petition ; but the King, stimulated by personal terror and revenge, would listen to no remonstrance, and the 10th of December was fixed for the execution.

When Condé was informed of the decision, there was no change in his demeanor. A priest

was sent to him to perform mass. "For what purpose?" said Condé.

"To prepare you for death," replied the holy father.

"This is a work," said Condé reverently, "that I can thankfully trust to my Maker; it rests between him and myself. Leave me; it is time for the work to begin."

The priest retired, shocked at the *blasphemies* he had heard.

Then came a gentleman of the Court, a warm friend of the Guises. Condé received him with courtesy. Having expressed his deep sympathy, he hinted, that possibly an accommodation might take place, and requested to be his mediator.

"I ask but one *Mediator*," said Condé solemnly; "and that one is interceding for me at the throne of Grace. Return, my Lord, to your employers, and tell them you *have failed in your mission*."

One more trial yet awaited him. His wife was conducted to his prison. When she entered, she threw herself into his arms, unable to speak.

"This is kind," said Condé; "I know your errand; it is to confirm, to support, to give new strength to your husband; to tell him you will live to perform *his* duties and your *own*; to teach our children, that their father, though dying an ignominious death, bears a true and loyal heart.

And now, farewell. Let us not prolong this painful interview. Nothing can be done by *your* means or *mine* ; it is hopeless. Let us not add disgrace to sorrow. All things are in the hands of God ; he may yet save a life that has been sincerely devoted to his cause."

Again, the Princess would have spoken, but Condé said ; "No more ; write all you would say. Farewell." And he retired to an inner apartment.

This scene has been adduced as a proof of want of affection and sensibility in the warrior. But who does not see in it the truest tenderness towards his wife. Unfortunately, the dissolute manners of the age were often adopted by the Prince, and are alleged justly against him.

While Condé was thus meeting his sentence with calmness and dignity, his brother of Navarre was a prey to the most distressing terrors. Every one who approached him, to his imagination, bore an instrument of death ; sometimes he refused to eat, because he believed the food was poisoned. It was said, that the King actually determined to put an end to his life with his own dagger ; but this seems wholly inconsistent with the feeble character of the monarch, and probably the story originated in the terrors of Navarre.

The time appointed drew near, and the Guises became impatient for the execution of Condé.

Francis, always feeble in health, began obviously to decline. Catharine, at this time of debility and weakness, knew well how to mould her son to her purposes ; almost in the act of dying, she obtained from him an avowal, in the presence of numerous witnesses, that the steps which had been taken against the Bourbons, Condé in particular, were entirely his own, and against the advice of herself and the Guises, who had implored him to desist. He therefore desired, that Condé might be conducted to his presence, and a general amnesty take place.

On this occasion were assembled the Guises, and the King of Navarre. Mary, his young Queen, was a subordinate character in the scene, and the only one without plots or contrivances, who wept by his bedside. Francis, after witnessing the reconciliation of the Guises and Bourbons, and probably unconscious in reality of what was passing, expired three or four days before the execution of Condé was to have taken place.

Hitherto, Catharine had often discovered some of the sensibility and irresolution of a woman. She had been accessory to drawing the Bourbons into the snare laid for them, and yet wept when she saw the plan had succeeded, and would fain have saved the life of Condé. Henceforth all propensities, moral or natural, seem to be swallowed in her overweening love of sway. She

had persuaded Francis to die with a falsehood on his lips ; for no one believed his avowal sincere. She then summoned the King of Navarre, who, by law, had a share in the regency, and promised to spare the life of Condé, and protect himself and kingdom, if he would renounce, and make over to her, all claims upon the regency. To this, his timidity induced him to consent.

Charles the Ninth, now nine years old, succeeded Francis, and Catharine de Medicis became Queen Regent. Her first step was, to recall the veteran Constable Montmorency, to balance the power of the Guises. This measure, owing to political causes, failed, and the Constable soon united himself to the Guises, making a formidable secret party, with the Mareschal de St. André, against Catharine, who determined to strengthen her own by favoring the Protestant or *Huguenot* cause, which name was now universally adopted.

The origin of this designation does not seem to be ascertained ; it having been supposed by some to be derived from the German word *Eidgenossen* ; * by others, from the gate of Hugo, in the city of Tours, where they first assembled. Probably, however, it boasts no other origin than the names so current in the present day of Whig, Tory, &c., and was a mere party denomination.

* Oath-confederated.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEPARTURE OF MARY.—CAPTURE OF
CONDÉ.

THE parties opposed to Catharine were formidable, and are termed by the Huguenots the Triumvirs, and known by that name in history. The union of the Constable with the Duke of Guise was an unexpected blow to her. In fulfilment of her promise to the King of Navarre, she announced to Condé that he was free. But the Prince disdained to accept of his liberty as a favor, and demanded a judicial acquittance. This was granted by the Parliament of Paris, and Condé quitted his prison.

About this time, the Cardinal of Lorraine came forward and proposed, that the most distinguished of the clergy of both parties should hold a dissertation at Paissy, in order to discuss controverted points; adding, that he would readily take the ground against any antagonist that might offer. The Huguenots accepted this proposal with joy, confident of their polemic success.

While these political events were passing, the Parliament issued a new edict against the re-

formed party, called the "Edict of July." Mary, the widowed Queen of Francis, retired from the Court, exiled by the coldness of Catharine. Her Scotch subjects were impatient for her return, and rejoiced that she would be solely their sovereign. Her attachment to France was not easily dissolved. When her uncle, the Duke of Guise, informed her that he was prepared to escort her to Calais, she received the intelligence with undisciplined grief; and it was only by representing to her, how degrading and painful her situation would be in the Court of Catharine, that she finally consented to depart immediately. Scotland was at that time held in horror by the gay and polished nation of France. Mary, during her husband's life, had seen herself the idol of the Court; and with tears and sighs she prepared to quit the scene of her former happiness.

When Catharine de Medicis found that Mary had fixed the day of her departure, her deportment became kind and caressing, and she made every preparation for her escort in a manner suited to her dignity as the Queen of two powerful nations. Six princes of Lorraine with a large number of distinguished noblemen, attended her. Catharine took leave of her with her eyes bathed in tears. Mary's too overflowed, as she cast a last look on her parting attendants.

While the vessel in which she embarked re-

mained in sight of the French coast, she would not retire to the cabin. Leaning against the balustrade, stood the youthful Queen, her form inclined forward, her mourning veil thrown back, her thoughtful eyes fixed on the receding shore ; tears chased each other down her cheeks ; she sighed bitterly and exclaimed ; "Farewell, France ! beloved country, which I shall never more behold !"

At length, darkness veiled every object, and Mary could no longer distinguish the outline of the horizon. Anxiously she inquired whether morning would restore to her longing eyes the coast of France. On being informed that probably it would, as there was a head wind, she ordered a couch to be placed on the deck, and hailed the first ray of morning. Again she beheld the Gallic coast, stretched like a dark line upon the ocean. Suddenly the wind veered about, a brisk gale arose, and Mary's prediction proved true, — she saw *France no more !*

When the Duke of Guise returned to the Court, he found that Condé was making preparations for a hostile decision of the quarrel between them. The Prince did not entertain a doubt but that the Duke was the cause of his arrest and imprisonment. An apparent reconciliation, however, was brought about by the young King under the influence of the Queen-mother, and a hollow amnesty concluded between them.

The time had now arrived for the disputation at Paissy. The Protestant ministers consisted of twelve in number, headed by Theodore Beza, the friend of Calvin, and Peter Martyr, who had been the intimate friend of Cranmer. In imitation of Luther he had married a nun.

We are tempted to wonder why Calvin was not among these learned and able men, but probably his increasing ill health and infirmities rendered it impossible.

Beza preached on his arrival at St. Germain, in the saloon of the Prince of Condé, before a large and distinguished audience. In the evening he was invited to the apartments of the King of Navarre. The Queen-mother received him with courtesy, and inquired after his friend Calvin with much curiosity.

Any one who has a taste for controversy may easily get the subjects and process of this discussion from De Thou, and other historians. Many private conferences were held; the debates continued several days, and finally terminated in as unsatisfactory a manner as such debates usually do. The reformed ministers now prepared to leave France; but Catharine would not suffer Beza to depart. She told him, that she claimed him as a Frenchman, and assured him that his residence at the Court might greatly promote the cause of the Reformation, promising him to place

no obstacles in his way. Beza thought it his duty to yield, and suffered his friends to return to Geneva without him. Protected by Catharine, and a powerful retinue, Beza delivered two sermons the morning following Christmas.

A few days after, he was requested to attend at a meetinghouse situated in the Fauxbourg St. Marcel, where a discourse was to be given by a Protestant minister. Beza was reluctant, owing to some rumors he had heard of a disturbance, and advised them to omit the meeting; but, finally, he consented to attend it. About twelve hundred were assembled. The preacher, Malot, arose, and scarcely had he begun, when his voice was drowned by a chime of bells from a neighbouring church. Some of the congregation went out to request that the ringing might cease. A quarrel ensued, and many lives were sacrificed. In consequence of this riot, another edict was issued called the "Edict of January." Though essentially mild in its form, the Huguenots had increased so much in power and pretension, that they were impatient under it. This once hunted and proscribed people, could now count two thousand one hundred and forty congregations, dispersed through every part of the kingdom. Beza had publicly performed the ceremony of marriage between two favorites of the Queen of Navarre, in the presence of Catharine, of the Prince of Condé, and of the Admiral Coligni.

Hitherto, the King of Navarre had been considered a warm advocate of the Huguenot party ; but he now began to show signs of vacillation, and at last declared, that he considered the reformed ministers as charlatans and impostors, and expressed his determination to remove his son from their influence, and place him with Catholic governors. His Queen, who had so long been faithful to the Protestant cause, heard this avowal with dismay. After using persuasions and entreaties, she was obliged to yield ; but, passionately embracing her child, she exclaimed ; “ O, my son, if you renounce the religion of your mother, she will renounce and disinherit you. Keep to the faith in which you have hitherto been educated, and God will be your guide and support.”

“ My dear Madam,” said Catharine, who was present, “ let me advise you to suppress this violence of emotion. I have always found it best *to appear to yield*. Assume a seeming conformity to your husband’s will, even attend mass, and you will more easily get the reins into your own hands.”

The Queen of Navarre indignantly replied ; “ Rather than attend mass, if I had my son in one hand, and my kingdom in the other, I would throw them both into the sea.”

The secret of this change of religious princi-

ple in Anthony of Navarre, consisted in the influence of the Spanish King, who had always been getting advantage over his kingdom by the force of arms, and had now proffered peace if he would sacrifice his religious faith.

The Duke of Guise had been absent from Paris several months, and his return was anticipated with dread by the Huguenots, and with anxiety by Catharine. The Duke, accompanied by the Cardinal of Lorraine, and a numerous suite of noblemen and attendants, arrived in France, and directed his course through the town of Vassy, on the borders of Champagne, about ten miles from Joinville, where were the chateau and principal estate of the Guises.

On the banks of the Bloise a small Protestant church had been consecrated. It was as simple as possible in its structure, and as wholly opposed to the Catholic cathedrals as could well be imagined. With a lingering attachment, however, to early forms, the society had purchased a chime of bells, which rung their morning and evening service. Antoinette, the mother of the Duke, was often in her excursions offended by the distant peal. She was a bigoted Romanist, and looked upon this musical chime as an insult on the true religion and her own dignity. She had frequently spoken to her son on the subject, and represented them as throwing direct defiance at their noble stock.

Probably the Duke thought, by passing through Vassy he might intimidate and disperse the little band of worshippers. He arrived near the place at an early hour, amid the gray mists of morning, and distinguished the distant chime of bells reverberating among the hills. It was well understood that it was a summons to Huguenot worship, and a murmur of indignation was heard throughout the train of the Duke.

Suddenly they put spurs to their horses and galloped forward. A company of troops had gathered at Vassy to do honor to the Guises, and soon joined them. When they entered the town, some of the pages and under officers hastened to the church. They found about twelve hundred assembled, peaceably engaged in devout worship, and all of them armed, and in all respects keeping strictly to the law prescribed in the late Edict of January. They were attacked by insulting language, but, hastily closing the doors and wooden windows of the meetinghouse, endeavoured quietly to pursue their worship.

The assailants burst in, and a scene of carnage ensued. The Duke, when informed of what had taken place, hurried to the spot, endeavouring to put an end to the warfare. He found both sides in a most furious state of excitement, and, in endeavouring to quell the tumult became slightly wounded in the cheek, by the scratch of a bayonet.

His retainers immediately observed the blood, and uttered cries for vengeance. The Duke sought to explain, and even added menaces towards his own party;—they were furious. Sixty Huguenots were slain, and more than two hundred wounded. Their venerable pastor barely escaped with his life, and was badly wounded. The pulpit was destroyed, the Bible torn in pieces, the leaves scattered to the wind, and even the dead bodies were stripped and plundered.

The Huguenots at once sent a memorial of their wrongs to the Queen-mother, well knowing that the Parliament had always proved hostile to them. Catharine despatched a message to the Duke of Guise, requesting him not to enter Paris, as his presence, at that time, would excite the utmost commotion among the reformed party.

The Duke paid no attention to this request, but presented himself, with a powerful escort, at the gate of St. Denis, which was always selected for the state procession of the King. Here he was received with acclamations by the Catholics, and such honors were bestowed upon him as were usually reserved for royalty.

Catharine could no longer control her apprehensions, and, fully believing that it was the object of the Guises to assume the throne, endeavoured to draw Condé into her schemes. That Prince, however, judged it prudent to retire from Paris,

where the Triumvirate were now supreme, and, if necessary, begin hostilities elsewhere.

The Triumvirate immediately secured the persons of Catharine and her son, and they were guarded with all outward respect by the Constable de Montmorency.

Condé, convinced there was no other resource, prepared for civil war, and, in concert with Coligni, commenced his march to Orleans, a city which, next to Paris, was most important to their interests. He arrived there with his followers on the 1st of April, and found the place filled with Huguenots. The streets were lined with them, and, instead of war-songs, they sung psalms and hymns, as he passed between their ranks.

Condé was well pleased to find, that he was aided by men of family and character, and by distinguished counsellors. An association was formed, and a manifesto published, in which the Huguenots set forth their wrongs, dwelt upon the late outrage at Vassy, and upon the seizure of the King and Queen-mother by the Guises. The Prince of Condé was invested with full power to do as he thought advisable, and unbounded confidence was expressed towards him.

The hostile parties immediately prepared for a civil war; all France was in a state of horrible commotion; enormities were committed on both sides, and the ruin of the kingdom seemed to be

inevitable. Shocking cruelties were enacted by both parties at Lyons, and, in short, in every city in France; cruelties, which we willingly omit, wishing only to record, in general terms, the spirit of the times. While the Huguenots were awaiting at Orleans the motions of their enemies, Catharine, probably at the secret instigation of the Guises, entered into a negotiation with Condé.

A personal conference was appointed between them at Thuri. Both were to bring one hundred followers, and it was expressly stipulated, that these were to remain at a considerable distance asunder.

Catharine appeared with her followers, and, with the address for which she was distinguished, assumed the plainest costume. Her flowing black robes and black veil, which mingled with them, gave an air of majesty and solemnity to her whole appearance.

When the two leaders appeared in sight, they stepped forward, — Condé in his martial accoutrements, and Catharine in her widowed garb. Their meeting was apparently that of friends, though probably on both sides there was mutual distrust. While they conversed in low tones, their followers were recognising each other with aching hearts. They were forbidden to meet, lest quarrels might be engendered; but it was soon evident, that only tender and sad emotions were

excited, and they implored leave to rush into each others' arms. Now were reunited for a moment, brothers, cousins, and uncles of the same family, and friends who had been schoolmates ; and the most cordial embraces passed. Then came a sudden rush of tears, as they recollected how soon they were to be opposed as deadly enemies.

Between Catharine and Condé nothing was effected by this meeting, and they parted with mutual and hollow professions of amity.

Both armies now took the field. The Royalists were successful in getting possession of Blois, Tours, Poitiers, and Bourges, and then proceeded to attack Rouen, which was intrusted to Montgomery, one of the Huguenot chiefs.

The Duke of Guise pushed the attack, and the King of Navarre felt bound to exhibit personal bravery ; while exposing himself in one of the trenches, he was struck by a ball.

The victory of the Royalists was after a long siege secured, and horrible carnage followed. One remarkable circumstance is recorded by the historian De Thou.

Francis de Cville, an officer, was wounded at the head of his company, in the heat of battle, and fell into a ditch, without any signs of life ; — he was stripped by the opposite party, and thrown into a hole. A faithful domestic of Cville's obtained leave to search for the body of his master.

It was only by a small ring on his finger, that had escaped the cupidity of the plunderers, that he was enabled to discover the body. On examining it he found a slight motion of the heart. He conveyed him to the surgeons ; they pronounced the case desperate ; but the faithful domestic insisted on all measures being tried, and strove to administer nourishment, but could not succeed, owing to the locking of his teeth. At length the surgeons were prevailed upon to give him proper attention ; his wounds were dressed and nourishment administered, and he began slowly to recover. A new attack, however, once more exposed him to the enemy ; his chamber was entered, and his body seized and thrown from the window. He fell on a dunghill below, and lay two or three days without nourishment or assistance. At length he was discovered by friends, and every measure used for his restoration ; he recovered, and survived for more than forty years afterwards.

The King of Navarre suffered severely from his wound, and it became evident that it was fatal. His mind wavered between the reformed and the Catholic religion. While a Huguenot minister prayed by his bedside, a Catholic priest was introduced, and both parties claimed him for their own.

In his last moments he turned to an old do-

mestic, and urged him to be faithful to his son. He died in the forty-fourth year of his age, probably little regretted by either party, as his want of moral courage and resolution had left him but few friends.

Condé, after the siege of Rouen, took his position with his army near the little town of Dreux. The Royalists followed so close, that a battle appeared inevitable, and it was decided by the Catholics to give battle without delay.

The day before, as Condé was passing a rivulet near the Chateau de Maintenon, an old woman called to him ; the Prince stopped ; she followed him into the water and caught hold of his dress, looked earnestly in his face, and then, relinquishing her grasp, exclaimed, " Accomplish thy work, Prince ! God is with thee, but thou wilt suffer much ! "

The same night he dreamed that he fought three battles, one after the other, and saw his three enemies lying dead, but he also was mortally wounded. These dreams were thought prophetic, and afterwards mentioned as important !

The next morning the bloody fight began. Guise was foremost in the battle, yet always preserving his coolness and self-possession. Admiral Coligni, who commanded one wing, was compelled to give way. The Marischal de St. André was killed, and Montmorency, the commander

of the Catholic army, taken prisoner ; and, on the part of the Huguenots, the capture of Condé followed. Thus the commanders of the opposite parties were both captives.

After the battle Condé was conducted as a prisoner to the tent of the Duke of Guise. That nobleman received him with the utmost respect and kindness, and, historians say, shared his bed with him !

The Duke seemed now to be left without any other rival than Catharine, and he determined to extort from her the appointment of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. The Queen-mother probably thought it best to yield with a good grace, and he took possession of his new honors.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATHS OF THREE CHIEFS.

ADMIRAL COLIGNI, after the defeat at Dreux, retired to Orleans, which was still in possession of the Huguenots. He was immediately elected chief, during the captivity of Condé.

Some affairs called him to Normandy, as the spring approached, and the Duke of Guise considering his absence as affording a favorable opportunity, commenced the siege of Orleans.

He was confident, that he should soon gain possession of this important place, and expressed his sanguine belief of entering it victorious. On the 18th of February, while returning to his quarters, he was wounded in the right shoulder by three bullets.

"They have long owed me this," said he to his attendants, laying his cuirass aside, "but it will be nothing." The wound, however, soon assumed a dangerous aspect, and he declared that it was fatal. His Duchess was sent for ; he took an affectionate leave of her, and told her to prepare herself for the will of God. The Queen-mother, too, visited him.

On his deathbed he declared, that he was wholly innocent of the blood shed at Vassy, and there was no one who disbelieved him. He lingered six days, and expired at the age of forty-four.

Few men had filled a wider sphere in his native kingdom ; it was his fate to live in troubled times. However his character might have been corrupted by inordinate ambition, he possessed great and heroic qualities, with a lofty intellect. His path was one of struggle and contention, and it may be doubted whether his own aggrandizement did not swallow up the essential good of his country. Poltrot was the wretched assassinator of the Duke. There seems to have been a mixture of insanity and religious enthusiasm in the cowardly act. He accused the Mareschal de St. André and the Prince of Condé as accomplices, with many others ; but his assertions were contradictory, and ought not to have carried any weight with them, though Coligni and Condé sought to refute them. He suffered the death of a regicide, which was adjudged by the French law. Even Beza was implicated by the murderer.

It was for the interest of the Queen-mother to exhibit every appearance of grief. The obsequies of the Duke were celebrated on the very day of Poltrot's execution, and Catharine might have been mistaken for chief mourner. She no

longer denied regal honors to him she had now ceased to fear. His body was conveyed to the church of Notre Dame, where solemn rites were performed, and was then transported to the family mausoleum at Joinville, where resided the ancient domestics of the noble house. It is pleasant to turn from the artificial exhibitions of grief to the sad and deep sorrow of faithful attachment. Here were kindred, friends, and aged domestics; and whatever might have been the feeling of relief his death occasioned to his enemies, true hearts were yet found to mourn for him.

All outward honors were paid the family. Henry, the young Prince of Joinville, was made Grand Master of the Palace and Governor of Champagne; and his other sons, though yet mere boys, were distinguished by nominal offices.

We may here mention the death of another great leader, though it did not take place immediately after the Duke's. It was that of a man, who had, perhaps, had greater influence on the destinies of France than the Guises or the Bourbons;—one who had sent fire and sword amongst them;—one who had wielded an irresistible power over religious opinion, which has, in all periods of the world, proved more mighty than regal sceptres. Those opinions, which had years before been thundered through the Vatican by the boldness of the German reformer, had now

made progress in France through the Genevan minister.

The death of Calvin took place in the year 1564. Though suffering pain and disease for some time previously to this event, he never relaxed his labors. "How unpleasant to me is an idle life!" he would say, when compelled from exhaustion to lay aside his book or pen. His mind was constantly vigorous; even when asleep, he seemed to have a consciousness of what was passing. He was of a thin, spare frame, and for ten years he never eat from morning to evening. He considered fasting his only remedy for disease, and, when sick, was known to refrain from all food for thirty-six hours. His sufferings from complicated diseases were often great. Sometimes in extreme agony he exclaimed, "How long, O Lord!" When his friends entreated him to rest from his labors he would say, "Would you have my Lord find me idle when he cometh?"

The last day he ventured out, he was carried to the door of the senate-house and proposed a new rector for the school. Then thanking them for favors conferred upon him he said, "I think I have entered this house for the last time." We extract from his life, by Beza, the following sentence in his will; such testimonies prove that he, like Luther, had sought no worldly gain.

"I appoint Anthony Calvin, my very dearly

beloved brother, my heir, but only as a *mark of respect*. Let him take charge of, and keep as his own, my silver goblet, which was given me as a present by Mr. Varanne ; and I desire he will be content with it. As for the residue of my property, I commit it to his care with this request, that he restore it to his children after his death.

“ I bequeath, also, to the school for boys, ten golden crowns, to be given by my brother and legal heir ; and to poor strangers the same sum. Also to Jane, daughter of Charles Costans, and to my half-sister by the paternal side, the sum of ten crowns. Furthermore, I wish my heir to give on his death to Samuel and John, sons of my said brother, my nephews, out of my estate, each forty crowns after his death, and to my nieces Ann, Susan, and Dorothy each thirty golden crowns. To my nephew David, as a proof of his light and trifling conduct, I bequeath only twenty-five golden crowns.

“ This is the sum of all the patrimony and property which God hath given me, as far as I am able to ascertain, in books, movables, household furniture, and all other goods and chattels.”

The estimate of all his property amounted to three hundred crowns ! There is something touching and respectable in the poverty of men, whose names have stirred all Europe, and whose principles and doctrines have shaken the thrones

of powerful monarchs. We feel for a moment, at least, the insignificance of wealth and the power of mind.

Calvin was nearly fifty-five when he died. His stature was of the middle size, his complexion dark and pale, his eyes brilliant ; his power of memory remarkable. He was naturally grave, but social ; and an *austere reformer*, exacting from others what he required from himself. His letters give the most faithful history of his opinions. Though there does not appear to have been any moroseness in his domestic character, we insensibly connect that idea with his doctrines, which were gloomy and austere.

Never could there have been a period when it was more truly a blessing to die by the natural progress of disease. Murders and assassinations were so frequent, that the death of distinguished men, when gradual, was often attributed to poison. Calvin was beckoned home by the hand which he recognised ; he died under his own peaceful roof-tree, a minister of God.

The death of the Duke of Guise, the great leader of the Catholics, produced a disposition to accommodation on their part, and Catharine began a negotiation with Condé, who earnestly desired his liberty.

Condé at first demanded the restoration of the Edict of January ; but the Constable Montmoren-

cy, who was a prisoner in the hands of the Huguenot party, rejected the demand, and assured Catharine that it would alienate the Catholics to grant it. The terms proposed were warmly seconded by Eleanor, the Princess of Condé, and she used all her powers of persuasion to induce her husband to accept of them. The Huguenots were to be permitted to exercise freely the worship of the reformed religion in their own houses and families in every Province. But in the city of Paris, and where the Court resided, the exercise of any other religion than the Roman Catholic was prohibited. Every one was allowed to retain opinions according to his conviction, but the "pretended reformers" were to observe the holy days in the Roman Calendar. Condé thought proper to consult the ministers of his religion. They all declared, that, as they had taken up arms for the Edict of January, they would not consent to any infringement of that edict, and requested him to wait till the arrival of Coligni before he assented to a peace, that would prove a deathblow to their rights.

Condé's impatient temper ill brooked remonstrance or imprisonment, and he proceeded to accept the conditions and sign a peace, called "the Treaty of Amboise."

Five days afterward, the Admiral arrived at Orleans with a powerful army. His indignation was

bitter when he found that Condé had consented to such unworthy terms without his knowledge.

He represented that their situation was never more favorable for a propitious peace, and the restoration of the full rights of conscience. Two of the Triumvirs were dead, the third was a prisoner, and yet they had accepted terms, that were disgraceful to their cause. He stated, that Condé had "injured the Reformed Church more by the stroke of his pen, than the Catholics could have done in ten years with all their armies."

Both parties were dissatisfied with the peace proclaimed, the Catholics thinking too much had been granted, and the Huguenots too little. Condé, after being released from prison, remained at the French court, and about this time the death of his wife, Eleanor du Roye, took place. Catharine soon formed the project of uniting him to one of her favorites, hoping to withdraw him from the Huguenot cause. But the Prince, who in the death of his wife felt all restraint removed, passed his time in dissolute amusement. We leave to historians the recital of his disgraceful conduct. In a few months he married Frances of Orleans.

Catharine now determined to take advantage of the cessation of hostilities, and make a tour through the several provinces with the King. One powerful motive, which influenced her was,

to visit Jane of Navarre, who, after her husband's death, had asserted the full power of the reformed religion, and, with unwise zeal, had banished the Catholic priests, thrown down the altars, and demolished the images. The Pope hearing of this excess of defiance, after admonishing her in vain, sent to her to desist from persecuting the Catholic religion, and to return within six months to the bosom of the church, or she would be excommunicated, and her country given to the first who conquered it.

Jane listened to this arrogant denunciation with indifference ; but not so Catharine ; she saw new temptations held out to Spain to attempt a further conquest of Navarre, and she determined to visit Jane, and, if possible, persuade her to renounce this open defiance, and, if she failed in that measure, to bring away her son, Prince Henry, that he might not be brought up under the influence of Huguenots.

Both Catharine and the young King used every argument and persuasion to induce the Queen of Navarre to change her religious opinions. Finding that she only smiled at these attempts, they ceased to urge her, and contented themselves with her promise of shortly visiting them.

During the King's progress through the provinces, he was shocked to find the religion in which he had been bred treated with apparent

insult, the Catholic churches desecrated, and the altars trodden under foot. From this time he became the bitter enemy of the Huguenots, and no doubt believed, that fire and sword were lawful weapons in exterminating them.

Jane fulfilled her promise and repaired to Paris, but soon found her residence unpleasant and left the court. Whilst these things were passing in the capital, the Huguenots became impatient of the restraint that Condé's acceptance of the Queen-mother's terms had imposed ; and, protesting that they had never assented to the peace, endeavoured, in many places, to set aside the stipulations by force of arms.

The King was of an impetuous and irritable disposition, and, on Admiral Coligni's appearing at court, received him in no very amicable mood. This feeling was greatly heightened, when the Admiral boldly complained to him of the restrictions under which the Huguenots were laid. "It is hard," said he, "that none but the family are permitted to hear the word of God in the private houses, where it is preached. We are," continued he, "unable to admit a friend, who may chance to visit us, to our worship, while the Catholics are permitted to assemble when and where they please."

"The case is wholly different," said the Constable Montmorency, who was present. "The

King does not tolerate the Catholic religion ; it is that of the country, and the one he professes, derived from a long list of ancestors ; whereas the toleration of the new religion is simply a grace."

Charles listened with indignation to Admiral Coligni's complaints, and afterwards said to the Queen-mother, "that the heads of some of the Huguenots were carried too high for the peace of France ; it was necessary they should be lowered."

Nothing could exceed the unhappy state of France at this time, nor could peace be long preserved under such opposing interests. Information was received among the Huguenots, that designs were meditated against the life of the Admiral and the liberty of Condé, and that the tolerant edicts were to be altogether revoked.

Coligni, and his brother d'Andelot, at once declared, that the only resource of the reformed party was again to take up arms. Secret communication was effected, and the little town of Rosney named as the place of general rendezvous. One object became important to them, and this was, to get possession of the King's person and also secure the Queen-mother.

The two latter were now residing at Monceaux, a chateau of the Queen's, where she was in the habit of assembling the beauties of the

court. Feasting and dancing, with every species of gayety, seemed to be her whole object. Rosney was not far from Monceaux, and to this place the Huguenots repaired as secretly as possible. Catharine, who never wholly slumbered, received information, that the Huguenots were collecting at Rosney. She immediately comprehended Charles's dangerous situation, and in the most rapid manner, leaving all their attendants behind, fled with him to Meaux.

On arriving, she sent for the Constable Montmorency and ordered the Swiss guards to approach immediately to their aid. It now became a subject of discussion whether they should remain at Meaux, which was poorly fortified, or attempt a retreat. Montmorency, and the able Chancellor de l'Hôpital, decided for remaining, but the Cardinal of Lorraine was earnest for them to repair to Paris, and thus the matter was decided. The Swiss had arrived within a few hours from their departure from Meaux, and late at night the Queen and her son set out on their journey, of about thirty miles, to Paris. They were wholly unprepared for such a step, without suitable accoutrements or horses; but a number of horsemen, on such miserable horses as they could procure, with all the ladies of the court, gathered about the Queen.

At daybreak they were met by the Huguenots.

and, some skirmishing ensuing, it was thought best, that the King should make his escape, with a strong detachment, and proceed to the capital.

In the mean time the Prince of Condé and the Admiral came up with six hundred horse, but no serious battle was fought. Only slight skirmishing took place ; the Swiss standing their ground with great bravery. The King was received with extreme joy on his arrival at Paris.

Both the Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligni were now convinced, that their measures had been badly planned, as success wholly depended on the rapidity with which they were executed.

A second time the Huguenots had brought upon themselves the charge of rising against their lawful sovereign. They were represented as traitors and insurgents, plotting against the liberty and crown of the King. The Huguenots marched immediately to Paris, resolving to lay siege to it.

We pause for a moment at this crisis of affairs, and remember the early Calvinists of France, hunted and proscribed, not daring to profess their faith or even acknowledge it. We now behold them laying siege to the capital of the kingdom !

Condé seized upon the important post of St. Denis, and the Constable Montmorency made it his first object to dislodge him. When he issued

from the gates of Paris to attack the Huguenots, he said, "My return shall be in triumph, if alive; or, if a corpse, after a death of glory in the moment of victory."

Nothing could be more desperate than the attack or the resistance. They entered at once into close engagement, and fought hand to hand. The Prince of Condé had his horse killed under him. Admiral Coligni was carried by a fiery Arabian charger (the bridle being cut) into the heart of the enemy; with wonderful intrepidity he kept his seat, and dashed through them without being recognised.

The division of the army headed by the Constable Montmorency became the great object of attack. He had already received a severe wound, when Robert Stuart, a Scotchman, rode up to him, with his pistol pointed at him. "Dost thou not know me?" said the Constable. "Yes," replied Stuart, "and, because I know thee, I present thee this," and instantly fired upon him. As Montmorency was falling he threw his sword with such force at Stuart, that his enemy fell wounded and apparently dead by his side.

Night came on, in the midst of this dreadful battle; it was dark and rainy, and the Huguenots retired, leaving the field in possession of the Catholics.

The next day witnessed the death of Montmo-

rency. Though in his eightieth year, he had fought with the ardor and bravery of youth. His death was tranquil and composed ; and when a confessor came to him and exhorted him to confess, he said, " It would be a brutish thing for a man, who had lived fourscore years, not to know how to die for a quarter of an hour." His character was that of a good soldier and a faithful subject, but a cold-hearted friend, ever swayed by the consideration of his own interest. He died wealthy and honored, leaving behind him a high estimate of his wit and sagacity, as well as of his knowledge of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH OF CONDÉ.—PEACE DECLARED.

THE death of Montmorency relieved Catharine from a man of whom she stood in awe ; and, though her ever-ready tears were shed on the occasion, she congratulated herself on having escaped from his admonitions and inspection.

She decreed the highest funeral honors to his memory, and his effigy was borne upon his hearse, a distinction hitherto reserved for those of royal blood. The office of Constable was left unfilled, Catharine pathetically declared, as a just tribute of reverence for the departed hero. The real reason was easily divined. It gave undivided power to her second and favorite son, the Duke of Anjou, for whom she obtained the post of Lieutenant-General, though his youth made it necessary that he should have a council of her own selecting.

In the mean time the Huguenots waited at Lorraine for a reinforcement of German soldiery promised them by the Elector Palatine, headed by his son, Prince Casimir.

While they awaited this arrival, both Condé and Coligni were busily employed in diffusing

courage and hope among their disheartened and scanty followers, and, even after the arrival of the troops, the difficulty of raising a sum for the pay of the Germans seemed likely to defeat their projects. On this occasion, however, the Protestant ministers used all their exhortations ; a number of them always accompanied the army, and, with an enthusiasm resembling that of the Crusaders, their audience sacrificed their worldly wealth, and every officer and every private threw his mite into the common stock. Condé and Coligni contributed their plate and jewels, and Prince Casimir, who had undertaken the cause from religious conviction, lent money to pay his own troops.

Condé, however, soon found, that all their means were insufficient. The Court at this time were willing to negotiate and grant a temporary amnesty ; always, however, determining to take summary vengeance upon the Huguenots for their former attempt upon Meaux. Another treaty was signed, in which the Huguenots were to restore all towns and fortified places in their possession, and to dismiss all foreign troops ; and, in return, the edict of Amboise, with all its privileges, was literally renewed to them. This was called the Treaty of Lonjumeau, the name of the town where it was signed.

However guilty the Huguenots may be con-

sidered for their sanguinary deeds, which were many, it ought to be remembered that they were fighting for the free exercise of religious opinions. They asked not honors or principalities, and, though they often retaliated with cruelty, it was when roused to madness and savage fury by the injuries they suffered. Even at this time, an inhabitant of Clermont, who had neglected to decorate his windows on a festival, during which the host was carried through the streets, was burned on his own wood-pile.

The populace, now unrestrained by the fear of the Huguenot armies, wholly disregarded the treaty, and committed on individual Protestants the most cruel murders. More than ten thousand were supposed to have been assassinated during six months.

The dismissal of De l'Hôpital from the Chancellorship deprived the Huguenots of their only advocate, and all decency was thrown aside. The Court considered the power of the Protestants prostrated, and Charles, who thoroughly detested them, cherished the favorite wish of exterminating them.

Both Condé and Coligni perceived the melancholy state of their party. The long civil war had thinned their ranks; they had neither men nor money; and they likewise received undoubted intelligence, that, notwithstanding the treaty of peace, their persons were to be captured.

Not a moment was now to be lost, and both of the commanders judged it necessary to collect their scattered troops, and take possession of some fortified town, strong enough for their defence. La Rochelle, situated on the Bay of Biscay, was the city on which they fixed. To arrive at it, almost the whole extent of France, from west to east, was to be traversed, and the intervening tract of country was thickly beset by enemies. As their occupation of this place was considered a last resort, it was decided that the families of the distinguished Huguenots should repair to the spot for protection.

The Princess of Condé was in a situation that rendered travelling unsafe, and the wife of D'Andelot, with three young children, accompanied her, D'Andelot being then absent. Coligni, with an equally helpless train, joined them, and for their escort and protection only one hundred and fifty men-at-arms could be provided.

Once they were near being taken, on the banks of the Loire, by the troops of Burgundy. They had just passed as the army arrived. As it was late, and the prey was sure in the morning, they halted at night, to refresh and recruit themselves after the pursuit.

The next morning the river was swollen to such a height as to become impassable, even by boats; and the Burgundians had the mortification

of finding, that the little band of Protestants had escaped, Heaven-protected.

The wonderful success, with which this march was performed, is hardly exceeded by any similar one, recorded in history. Constantly pursued, and, if overtaken, wholly unable to resist, after four and twenty days of anxiety and distress, the Protestants arrived at Rochelle. The Huguenot ministers did not fail to point out the wonders that had been wrought for their cause, and their retinue had largely increased. Numbers of the reformed flocked to Rochelle, and, shortly afterward, the Queen of Navarre arrived with her children and an army of four thousand men.

Henry of Navarre was then looked to as the future leader of the Protestants. He was, indeed, the "beautiful and brave" of his mother. Full of generous and noble ardor, though scarcely beyond the age of boyhood, he commanded respect and confidence from all around him. He was received at Rochelle with the most ardent demonstrations of affection. Addresses were lavishly presented to him, but somewhat too long, by civic orators. Henry listened patiently, but when they had ended, he said playfully, though respectfully; "I have not studied enough to speak as well as you do, Gentlemen; but I assure you, if I *speak* but ill, I will *do* better; for I know more of acting than of talking." Of a bold

and fearless temperament, he was often exposed to danger ; but his mother plainly demonstrated, that he inherited this spirit from her. Nor did the peril he incurred a few days after his arrival at Rochelle induce her to abridge the freedom of his movements. He had climbed to an eminence over the sea, and stood proudly gazing on the waters below. Suddenly he lost his balance, and fell into the ocean. A sailor plunged in after him, and saved him from death. Henry never forgot the act, but heaped rewards on his deliverer.

Rochelle had long been distinguished for its adherence to the Protestant cause. Ten years before this period, a theatrical piece had been performed there in honor of the King and Queen of Navarre, who were on a visit. It was much in the style of that exhibited before Francis the First, except that the Pope was not introduced. The curtain rose, and discovered a woman lying at the point of death, and earnestly imploring a priest to confess her and give her absolution. A numerous train of monks approached her, one after another, and exhibited beads and relics, and offered indulgences, and various passports to heaven. To all these she turned a deaf ear, saying, that they did not meet her wants, and she must die without salvation, unless aid could be found. Then stepped forward a man in a lay dress, and spoke

to her in a low voice. By degrees, the sick woman's countenance brightened, her strength returned, and she held out her hand, into which he put a book, and retired. The woman arose, and announced her perfect recovery, owing, she said, to the book that she held in her hand, and which she would lend to any of them, who did not fear fire and fagots. The name of the book is left to conjecture.

Rochelle was at this time in a flourishing state, and cherished a spirit of freedom that had partly arisen from their religious principles. From its advantageous port, it was well situated for becoming the capital of the Huguenots, and contained a population of about eighteen thousand persons.

It was not till some time after this gathering of the Protestants, that the battle of Jarnac was fought. The Duke of Anjou commanded an army about equal to that of the Huguenots. Elizabeth of England had furnished the latter with arms and money, owing to the indefatigable exertions of the Queen of Navarre. In March, 1569, the two armies met on the banks of the Charente.

We come now to an important crisis in the Protestant war. Condé, from some accident, had his arm in a sling, and as he rode along the lines, an unruly horse, by a severe kick, broke one of his legs. The hero scarcely discovered any emotion of pain, but, addressing those near him,

said ; " A fiery horse does more hurt than good ; and it is a silly vanity of managing him, which leads a man to select such an one. You see the consequences ; but, with my arm in a sling, and a broken leg, I have yet courage to give battle." He then rode forward, followed by about three hundred men, to join the Admiral Coligni, who was engaged with a detachment of the enemy. Suddenly he was surrounded by the main body of the Royalists, and immediately his horse was killed under him.

Condé, disabled, could no longer contend with the enemy, and, delivering his sword to two Royalists that he knew, seated himself on the ground, leaning against a tree. The captain of the Swiss guards rode up, and asked, whom they had taken prisoner. " Condé," was the reply. " 'Sdeath ! kill him !" said he, in a furious fit of passion ; and, suddenly discharging his pistol, the ball entered the head of the Prince, and killed him on the spot. The murderer was the Baron de Montesquin.

The Duke of Anjou, brother to the King, was a sworn personal enemy to Condé, and exulted in the death of his enemy. So great was the exultation he expressed, that some of his confidential officers cautioned him on the subject, telling him, that, by such unreserved joy, he might confirm reports, already circulating, that

Condé had been assassinated by his express orders. Anjou, thus cautioned, became more composed, and despatched a courier to the King at Mentz, where the Court were residing.

Charles received the intelligence of the victory with the utmost joy, and appointed a service of thanksgiving throughout the nation, notifying all the crowned heads of the success of their arms.

The Pope, Pius the Fifth, was the most animated in his replies, calling Charles his "beloved son, and begging him to continue the work till every Huguenot was extirpated." He represented the necessity of uniformity in religion, saying that his Majesty must be deaf to every prayer of mercy, and exercise the full rigor of the law. The Pope also wrote to Catharine de Medicis, mentioning that a vile slander had been propagated, in which she was accused of saving the lives of some heretics, but which he wholly discredits, and begs her to solemnly contradict. To the Duke of Anjou he wrote in the highest terms of praise, and to the Cardinal of Lorraine, the brother of the late Duke of Guise. He attributes to him the subsequent success of the Catholic arms, and exhorts him to suppress every sentiment of compassion, that he may see springing up in the bosom of the King. Such was the spirit of Pius the Fifth.

The battle of Jarnac, though so destructive to the hopes of the Huguenots by the death of

their leader, was not in other respects peculiarly disheartening. They lost about four hundred men, the Royalists about half the number. The Queen of Navarre never suffered herself for a moment to despond. As soon as she heard of the death of Condé, she took her young son and hastened from Rochelle to Jarnac.

“My friends,” said the Queen, collecting the warriors around her, “Condé has left his spirit with us, and a son who inherits all his virtues ; and I, also, have a son, who is the *property of the cause*.”

With an ardor not to be checked, the young Henry pressed forward. He was welcomed with shouts and newly inspired courage, was declared Protector of the Huguenots, and received oaths of fidelity from the principal officers in the army, while the chief command was given to Admiral Coligni.

The Admiral, who united the experience of age with the bravery of youth, was in no haste to risk a second battle. Though provoked by an unsuccessful attempt to poison him, which was traced to one of the emissaries of the Duke of Anjou, he remained calm, watchful, and self-possessed. As autumn advanced, however, his troops became impatient of their state of inaction and their moderate pay. The Germans even threatened a mutiny, and Coligni found it was necessary to take active measures.

Anjou, on his part, was eager to gather fresh laurels, and the two armies met on the heights of Paiton, near Moncontour. The first onset was disastrous to the Huguenots ; and, when the Duke of Anjou made a second onset, the languishing spirit of the Protestant army became visible. At this juncture, young Henry of Navarre rode among the troops, animating and encouraging them ; and, though yet but a boy, his gallant spirit seemed to infuse into them new life. Though both himself and Condé were too young to take part in the contest, they stood on a neighbouring height, watching the battle with intense anxiety.

We pause for a moment to dwell on the situation of these two young men, both destined to act so important a part in the history of France.

The Prince of Bearne, as Henry was then called, was but sixteen. On him rested the future success of the Huguenot cause ; yet here he stood, opposed to a mighty nation, and comparatively without resources. It was with difficulty that he was prevented from charging in person.

The battle was again decided in favor of the Royalists, and the victory at Moncontour called forth the same exultation as the one at Jarnac. The capture of Nismes, however, by the Huguenots, renewed their courage. The Court, with their usual policy, proposed a peace ; but Coligni

had learned that their proposals were intended merely to lull their enemies to security.

At length, however, the terms they offered were so advantageous, that the Huguenot chiefs had no longer any excuse for refusing them. The treaty of peace was concluded at St. Germain, in August, 1570. It included amnesty for the past, permission for the Huguenots to live in every part of the kingdom unmolested on account of their religion, and the right of celebrating public service in their chateaux ; and the King empowered his "most dearly beloved aunt," the Queen of Navarre, to have divine service performed in each of her fiefs, when she pleased. The schools and hospitals were thrown open without regard to difference of religion, and the Huguenots were permitted to hold all offices of dignity and responsibility. Such liberal terms should have awakened suspicion.

The four important towns of La Rochelle, La Charité, Montauban, and Cognac, were delivered for two years into the custody of the Princes of Navarre and Condé, that they might be a home for such of the reformed as chose to convene there. Rochelle was always the most important place for the Huguenots, as it gave them opportunity of intercourse with the English, who were their allies.

Coligni, the good Coligni, rejoiced that their

swords were again to be sheathed. He was heart-sick of the murders and atrocities of war, which no military discipline could prevent, and most earnestly prayed, that he might never again be called upon to go forth to battle.

CHAPTER X.

EVE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

IN the same year with the peace, Charles was married to Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, and another marriage was proposed by the King between the Prince of Bearne and his sister Margaret. The Queen of Navarre did not for some time accede to this proposal. At length, however, the political advantage arising from it, and the probable good which might accrue to the cause nearest her heart, determined her to consent. Pope Pius made vigorous opposition to this heretical union, and it was finally concluded against his supreme commands, though his violent opposition delayed it for a time ; but at length Mareschal Byron, the Queen-mother's officer, was sent to escort Jane to France, and make preparations for the marriage and for the arrival of her son. Her retinue was splendid. The Prince of Condé, and many of the Huguenot nobility, accompanied her. She took up her residence in the palace of Guillort,

Ex-Bishop of Chartres, who had been degraded at Rome for embracing the reformed religion.

Jane was daughter of Henri D'Albret, King of Navarre, and of Margaret of Valois, sister of Francis the First. She married Antony of Bourbon, as we have seen, and from this union sprang Henry of Bearne and Navarre. We do not repeat the so often related anecdote of her father's request, that she would sing during the pains of his birth, except as a proof of her dutiful compliance. When she heard his step approaching, in a sweet melodious voice she sung a Bearnese hymn to the Virgin, ending,

"Our Lady at the bridge's end,
Help in this hour of trouble send."

The character of this distinguished woman is not left to conjecture, nor is it open to the suspicions and calumny of intervening ages. Uncorrupted by the vices or superstitions of the times, she shone a "bright particular star" in the dark and cloudy firmament of the heavens. With acquirements far beyond that period, she possessed the amiable and graceful attractions of domestic life. She wrote with ease, and spoke Latin and Spanish with fluency. Men of talents and learning thronged to her court, because there they were treated with due respect. Versions of the New Testament were printed under her orders,

and at her expense, at Rochelle. Her courage, though never overstepping the bounds of discretion, often gave animation and resolution to the warriors about her. Coligni had preceded her, and was residing at the French court, and Jane, with a heavy heart, for she had little congeniality with its character, soon followed him, leaving Henry behind.

The King received her with every demonstration of respect and affection, and Catharine was eager to prove her devoted admiration. But it did not require a long stay at the court to discover its corruptions.

Notwithstanding the purity and simplicity of her manners, she could not avoid seeing a system of gallantry which she despised. Though scarcely comprehending the corruptions of Catharine's dynasty, she saw enough to fill her with disgust, and wrote freely to her son on the subject, expressing her regret at an alliance which was wholly opposed to her feelings. She described the Princess Margaret as "possessing beauty, wit, and an agreeable deportment ; but, brought up in this most corrupt court, what could be expected from her ?" "My son," she concluded, "you have rightly judged from my former letters, that their great object here is to separate you from me and from God. . . . Pray earnestly to God, whose assistance you need at all times,

but especially at the present ; and I, too, will add my fervent prayer, that he will grant you all your just desires."

For a short time, the Queen of Navarre, suppressing her indignation at the open gallantry of the Court, endeavoured to mingle with the *fêtes* and diversions, preserving her own chaste and simple style of dress, which might have been almost termed a silent censure on the free costume of the day.

The state of her health, however, in a short time, exempted her from this sacrifice of her feelings, and confined her to her room. Though she still admitted the King and Queen-mother, with the young Princess Margaret, to her apartments, she seldom found any opportunity of speaking to the latter alone. The third son of Catharine, the Duke of Alençon, though rough and unpolished in his manners, was her constant visiter. The Duke of Anjou only came when etiquette demanded. She spoke with freedom to Alençon about her wishes and plans, and expressed her earnest desire to return to Navarre.

This wish she was never permitted to accomplish. She rapidly grew worse, and at length declared she was dying. This was too apparent to those around her. What a moment for a mother ! far away from the son she had so long cherished as the hope and support of her life and of the

Protestant cause, — separated from her youthful and only daughter. Yet, with a calmness in accordance with her past life, she added clauses to her will, and exhorted her son to abide unshaken in the faith in which he had been educated, to shun the vices of the Court, and to observe the laws and constitutions she had formed for her subjects. She confided to him his sister, entreated him to watch over her with gentle affection, and, in time, to connect her, with her *full consent*, to some Protestant nobleman, of equal rank and virtue. She then pathetically implored the King and Queen-mother, and the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon, to receive her two children to their faithful care, and secure to them the free exercise of their religion.

After a short and fervent prayer, she closed her eyes, and opened them no more. Those who have studied out her history, and observed the influence she exerted over religion and letters, and the glory of her name among Protestants, will be surprised to learn, that, at her death, she was only in her forty-fourth year. Dark rumors were circulated, and the name of Maître Cardillac more than whispered. He was said to have attained the honor of being *court poisoner*, and numerous deaths were attributed to him. There were so many causes, which made the Queen of Navarre's death desirable at the French court,

and there was so little faith or decency there, that even historians are doubtful on this point, though an inspection of Jane's lungs proved that they were diseased.

Henry, of course, after her death, took the title of King of Navarre. The marriage was to take place between himself and Margaret, and great preparations were made for bridal festivities. The bridegroom offered no objection to the alliance, but the bride required all the intriguing art of Catharine to persuade her to relinquish a prior attachment.

It was under these unfavorable auspices, that, on the 13th of August, Henry led his beautiful bride to the high altar of the church of St. Denis, where mass was to be performed. When they arrived, he relinquished her hand and retired, while the Catholic service was performing. Margaret's countenance, though remarkable for its delicacy of complexion, was said to wear a flush of dissatisfaction, and a slight frown was perceptible on her fair forehead. A splendid retinue were in waiting, and the whole Court collected round. The King stood near. When the priest asked her "if she would accept Henry of Navarre for her husband," she neither moved her lips or made any sign, though the populace were anxiously expecting the response. At length, Charles, placing his hand behind her head, com-

pelled her to bow it forward ; and this was the only affirmative they could obtain.

Nothing could exceed the splendor of the festivities, or the extreme cordiality shown to the Huguenots. Every thing calculated to annoy them was removed. Charles protested the warmest friendship for Coligni, called him *father* when he addressed him, and, telling him that he entertained suspicions of the good faith of the Guises, ordered twelve hundred arquebusiers to be distributed in various districts of the city. Soldiers were likewise stationed for the avowed protection of the Huguenots, lest they should be insulted in the celebration of the marriage ceremonies.

Coligni possessed the generous trust of a noble mind, and harboured suspicion against no one. A day or two after the marriage, as he was returning to his abode, through the Rue des Fosses St. Germain, at a spot hardly a hundred yards from the Louvre, the Admiral was struck by two bullets, one entering his left arm, and the other shattering his finger. His attendants rushed forward. " They came from that house," said he, pointing to a building ; " inform the King."

The house was broken into and searched ; the arquebus was lying under a window, which was grated, with a curtain before it. No one could be found except an old woman-servant, and a boy, a mere child. By inquiries, it was at

length ascertained, that the assassin had made his escape.

But little doubt was entertained, that this base attempt was made at the instigation of the Court. The Queen-mother and the Duke of Anjou were more than suspected ; many proofs at the time and since have arisen. The cruelty of Anjou's disposition was well known, and the assassination of Condé was confidently attributed to him.

The King was engaged at his favorite game of tennis, with Condé and Navarre, when the news of the attempt to murder the Admiral was brought to him ; he threw down the roquet with great pretended dismay, and Navarre and Condé hastened to the Admiral.

They found him under the hands of surgeons. It was necessary to amputate one of his fingers, and his arm was dreadfully shattered. There is much testimony to his great and heroic patience on this occasion. He desired his chaplain to read consolatory passages from the Scriptures, and once exclaimed, " My God ! abandon me not in this suffering, nor let thy mercy forsake me ! " He then ordered one hundred pieces of gold to be distributed among the poor of his church.

Navarre and Condé, with all the Protestant noblemen, immediately begged leave of the King to withdraw from Paris, and take their beloved

Coligni with them. "Our lives," said they, "notwithstanding your Majesty's protection, are not safe from outrage."

Both the King and Catharine earnestly assured them, that they were as much aggrieved as themselves, and that every measure should be taken to give them satisfaction. They at length succeeded in quieting their suspicions; and the young Princes, with their followers, gave up their design of quitting the Court.

We now draw near the most eventful period of the Huguenot annals. Of the present Duke of Guise, who succeeded his father, suspicions were industriously circulated by the Queen-mother and by Charles, who both pretended great dissatisfaction towards the Guise family; even the Huguenot party, perhaps, entertained more distrust of them than of the King.

The Dukes of Guise and Aumale affected to be much hurt at the suspicions which rested on them, and declared to Charles that it was their intention to retire. He not only gave his consent, but expressed a determination to inquire into their conduct. They rode to the gate of St. Antoine, with a splendid retinue; and secretly returned to Paris.

On Saturday evening, the 24th of August, many things occurred, which filled the minds of men with a foreboding that something eventful was

about to take place. The Duke of Anjou was seen hurrying to and fro from the Louvre; where Charles and the Queen-mother resided; and the Duke of Guise, who had pretended to leave Paris, was recognised entering the palace. Directions were given to the chief head of the people, that two thousand armed men should be in readiness, every one wearing a white sleeve on his arm and a white cross in his hat; and that they should hold themselves in attendance for further orders; also, that lights should be put in every window of the city upon the ringing of the bell of the palace clock.

The Huguenots were at first startled at such preparations; but the measures taken to allay their suspicions succeeded, and, as it was the Eve of St. Bartholomew, they presumed new honors were to be paid to the Saint.

Coligni had that morning been declared out of danger. His friends were about him. The King of Navarre had ordered five Swiss guards in his service to patrol constantly his court-yard. Six attendants slept in his chamber. Navarre and Condé took leave of their beloved friend in the evening, promising to see him early in the morning, and more than ever assured of the success of their cause by his undoubted recovery, and the favorable terms offered by Charles.

Before the dawn of day, the loud tones of the bell of St. Germain de l'Auxerrois were heard. The Huguenots, ever on the alert, sprang from their beds, and their first thought was of their beloved Coligni. They were hastening towards his residence, when they were arrested by the information, that there was to be a *new amusement for the Court*. The Duke of Guise, and his uncle the Duke of Aumale, with some others, proceeded to the dwelling of the Admiral.

For the first time since his wounds, Coligni had experienced a night of refreshing slumber. The King and Queen-mother had lavished upon him expressions of the highest esteem. His young friends, Navarre and Condé, had received his blessing at parting, and Teligny, his brave son-in-law, slept in an apartment near, to guard his couch.

With the consciousness of upright intentions, and a sanguine conviction that his sword was for ever sheathed from civil war, that he should never again be called to take arms in defence of one part of France against another, and commending himself to the protection of God with his wonted piety, he sunk into a serene and deep sleep. From this he was awakened by the sound of firearms. The Admiral sprang from his bed, but was too weak for any effort. His chaplain,

Merlin, and several attendants rushed into his room.

"I fear for you," said Coligni; "to God let us commend ourselves." And he knelt in silent devotion; then, rising, listened for a moment. He was too well accustomed to the clang of arms and sounds of distress to mistake their import.

"Fly," said he to those around him; "it is my life they aim at; escape, it is impossible for me; and God has heard my prayer, he will receive me. I have long expected death. I beseech you to make your escape, and let not your wives hereafter attribute your deaths to me."

Heavy footsteps were heard on the stairs. The door of Coligni's apartment was burst open, and five assassins, clad in mail, entered. The Admiral stood firm and collected in his night dress. A follower and confidential retainer of the Duke of Guise approached him sword in hand.

"Young man," said Coligni, "thou oughtest to reverence my gray hairs; but do what thou wilt; thou canst shorten my life but very little."

Let us not pursue the shocking detail. It may be found minutely described too often. The venerable man sank under the daggers of his assassins, and his remains were dragged through the streets with impotent vengeance. Teligny gained the house-top, after vainly seeking to defend his

father-in-law ; but all were murdered, except Merlin, who sprang from the window.*

It was not till after the death of Coligni, that the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew began. For this, the great bell of the Louvre was tolled, and all rushed to action.

On the evening before this crisis, the Princess of Lorraine and the Queen-mother were in the apartment of Margaret of Navarre. Her sister, the Princess, in parting from her, discovered unusual emotion, and made an effort to speak ; but Catharine hurried her away. Margaret retired to her bed in a recess of the chamber, with the curtains drawn before it. Henry entered, and a large retinue of Huguenots followed him. She says, they debated for a long while in what manner an address should be drawn up for the King against the Duke of Guise. When they retired, and Navarre had left the room, she fell into a slumber ; from this she was awakened by loud cries of "Navarre ! Navarre !" and a ghastly figure covered with blood rushed in, and sought a hiding-place. The Princess sprang from her bed ; the poor wounded man clung to her knees, and besought her

* He remained concealed three days in a hay-loft, and fortunately found a few eggs in a hen's nest. It is from his account that the particulars of Coligni's assassination are known.

to save him.* Four archers followed him. Margaret's shrieks of horror summoned the captain of the guard, who left his barbarous work to hurry to her chamber, and, she says, laughed most heartily at her groundless terrors, while he rebuked the archers for their intrusion.

For three days and nights the work of carnage went on. The noble and faithful followers of Navarre and Condé, the choicest of the Huguenot party, who had assembled about their princes to guard them from any evil designs of the Guises, were all slain.

Nor was this horrible massacre confined to Paris. At Lyons the murder was general, and burial refused to the heretics. Their bodies were thrown into the Rhone ; and, so numerous were they, that its course was choked by the floating corpses. As the unconscious river wound its way through distant villages, once the messenger of tranquil beauty and freshness, watering the verdant and flowery banks, the astonished and terrified villagers beheld ghastly and mutilated bodies washed on their shores. It is said its waters and fish were for a long time unfit for use.

At Orleans, Rouen, and various other cities in France, all were slaughtered. It is computed that thirty thousand Huguenots perished, and that one third of the number belonged to Paris.

* She says, the life of the man was spared at her entreaty.

CHAPTER XI.

SIEGE OF ROCHELLE.

It may seem surprising that the two Princes of Navarre and Condé were spared in this frightful massacre. But they were both Princes of the royal blood, both residing under the roof of the King at the Louvre, and it would have been difficult to have attributed the massacre to the Guises, had this act been perpetrated upon his guests.

The Princes were arrested and carried into the presence of the King. Charles informed them that a horrible conspiracy had been discovered, among the Huguenots and they had suffered the penalty ; that Coligni was no more, but that he was willing to protect them with his own life, if they would renounce the creed which false and designing enemies had led them to adopt. It was said the King of Navarre temporized and answered evasively, that no true Prince could wish to abide by a false creed ; while Condé, less pliable in his manners and temper, answered in so high and resolute a tone, that the King drew forth

his dagger, and would have stabbed him, but for the interference of Catharine.

It is not surprising that these two young men, in the bloom and expectation of life, were at length induced to yield to the terms offered, to save themselves from the horrid fate of those around them. They appeared at mass, and solicited a reconciliation with the Mother-church ; and Henry went so far as to write letters to his hereditary subjects, desiring them to restore the ancient faith. The Bearnese at once refused obedience to this command, and declared, perhaps with truth, that Navarre had only submitted to such terms that he might live to avenge his faithful friends.

We cannot wholly pass over the influence that his bride, to whom he had been married but six days before, exercised over his mind. Though she had married him reluctantly, and on Henry's side there seems to have been no attachment of long standing, yet he, who was so much alive to female beauty, could hardly resist an influence, which she exerted by her mother's command. It seems to have been the only period after her marriage, in which she condescended to veil her real character, of which, at that time, Henry was ignorant.

The education of this unfortunate Princess had been wholly subservient to the political views of

her mother, who viewed all around her as but the tools of her ambition. The power she had obtained over Margaret of Valois, now Queen of Navarre, was unbounded, and it was only by her persuasions that the marriage had taken place. It is supposed that Catharine had really some affection and maternal regard for the generous and noble-minded young Prince ; but, even without that motive, his life was important, and she looked forward to the time when he might balance the power of the Guises, whom she greatly dreaded. "Go," said she to Margaret, "and conquer your husband, as you have done countless others."

Henry had none of the resolution of a stoic ; and, when his hitherto proud and almost scornful wife sought his presence, as if rushing from her toilet, with tresses unbound, and a negligence of costume, that apprehension for his safety only could excuse, when she threw her arms round him and besought him to renounce a cause that would leave her widowed and desolate, she proved that she already understood his character, and had discovered what historians attribute to him as the great blemish of his life, — a susceptibility that often prostrated his best resolutions. Had Margaret been the true and loyal wife of Henry, with a nature so noble and generous, she would have called forth his best and highest affections. But a very short time was necessary to convince him,

that they had both been sacrificed to the political plans of the Queen-mother.

The intelligence of Henry's reconciliation with the Church of Rome was received with great delight by the Pope. He wrote the most commendatory letters to the authors of the St. Bartholomew massacres, whose rage against the reformed party was not quenched even by death. A mock trial was instituted, and the estates of Coligni, as the head of the reformed party, were confiscated, his name was erased, his effigy (for his body was scattered, by the ruthless mob, to the four winds of heaven) drawn on a hurdle through the streets and gibbeted, his chief seat at Chastellan was razed to the ground, and no building was ever after to be placed on the spot. His children, by some accident, were absent from Paris, and escaped the massacre; but they were proscribed and degraded, and, to complete the dreadful infatuation, an annual public religious procession was formed to commemorate the signal favor of Heaven in turning on their own heads, the calamity which the Huguenots had designed for the faithful, at the feast of St. Bartholomew.

The extreme horror, with which this act of cruelty was heard by other nations, is its true commentary. Spain, alone, may be excepted. Philip was among those who congratulated Charles, as the saviour of his kingdom.

It is earnestly to be wished that more correct and minute details could be obtained of the immediate dispersion of the Huguenots. Some found refuge in England; many escaped to Germany, where they were received with open arms. Geneva, Basle, and Berne contended for the residence of Coligni's family and friends; and Beza, the ally and historian of Calvin, collected funds for the distressed refugees. Some fled to Cevennes, to Sancerre, Montauban, Nismes, and some to any of the strong-holds and mountain fastnesses, where they might live on berries and roots without the fear of man. Some, who had less resolution, gave up their religion, and subscribed to the Catholic terms.

One city, however, determined to be faithful to the last; and this was Rochelle. Here the firm-hearted and true collected, and against this city the strength of the French monarchy was directed. War was declared, and Byron was instructed to besiege the city. He was tardy in his movements, and earnestly desirous of an accommodation. It was the depth of winter; the city was protected on one side by the sea, and on all the others by marshes.

Representations were made to the King, which induced him to try to bring them to obedience. Charles employed, for this purpose, La Nouë, the former governor of Rochelle, a man of dis-

tinguished worth and honor, who was friendly to the Huguenot cause, and had married into Coligni's family. He was in active service abroad at the time of the St. Bartholomew massacre, or he would have been sacrificed as a heretic.

La Nouë undertook this office from the purest and most disinterested principles. Unfortunately the King, measuring his character by his own, to stimulate his endeavours, restored to him part of the confiscated estates of Coligni, and it was not till he had begun the negotiation, that this bribe was given. La Nouë had long been the trust of the Rochellois ; he who had won glory by the success of his arms, was now ready to aid them in their just cause ; and when they learnt that he would be with them, hope and confidence revived.

When La Nouë proceeded to announce his errand, — that he came to persuade them to admit Byron amicably within the city, — they answered, that they had expected to see their former friend, one who had fought for the glorious cause ; but they were convinced that some traitor had assumed his name, and even counterfeited his voice and manner.

La Nouë was stung to the quick by this reception, but proceeded calmly to state his motives. There is something in the voice of integrity that carries power with it ; they began to yield their

confidence, when the news arrived, that Charles had restored to him the confiscated estates of Coligni. Again their suspicions were roused, and it was with much difficulty that they could be calmed. After a long debate, they offered him the command of the garrison, and to live among them as a private citizen, conjuring him not to desert them now in their hour of need. Great, indeed, was his perplexity. After deliberately weighing all circumstances, he determined to accept their offer in the full belief, that, by persuading them to an honorable capitulation with Charles, he should save his beloved city. It is not our purpose to enter into a minute description of this first memorable siege of Rochelle, which has furnished themes for history and romance. La Nouë undoubtedly found he had undertaken too arduous a task, to serve two masters, and was finally glad to surrender his post, after contending against the infatuation and bigotry of the Protestant preachers, who urged him to give battle, saying, the Lord would perform miracles for his chosen people. La Nouë replied, that God had given us reason for a guide, and it was not to be expected that he would perform miracles, if we went in direct contradiction to the guide he had afforded us.

The Duke of Anjou, second brother to the King, had arrived at the royal camp to take com-

mand of the army. He was accompanied by a brilliant suite, the Duke of Alençon, his younger brother, the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and the Dukes of Guise, Aumale, and Longueville. The Duke of Aumale was soon killed by a cannon ball, in a sortie. This event was pronounced by the Huguenots a judgment of God for the murder of Coligni.

At length Montgomery appeared in the bay, with a fleet in aid of Rochelle, containing a larger number of sail than belonged to the royalists, but vastly inferior in discipline and order, and made up of a motley gathering of all nations. Indeed, Elizabeth, by way of apology to Charles, declared she had sent only pickpockets and thieves, that she hoped would be condemned for piracy.

Byron had been willing to leave to the Duke of Anjou the success of arms at Rochelle; but that Prince now found himself embarrassed by the disaffection of his brother Alençon. Since the murder of Coligni, whom Alençon loved and revered, his interest in the reformed cause had been increasing; probably, his intercourse with Navarre and Condé had confirmed his views. These factions, with the courage, perseverance, and gallantry of the besieged, began wholly to dishearten the princely leader. Five times he bravely led the royalists to the attack, and they were as many times driven back. At length he

received a wound that disabled him for battle, and, in the mean time, the news was brought him, that he was elected to the throne of Poland.

Catharine, his mother, had long been negotiating for this honor. The bravery and skill of Anjou, so lately exhibited, endeared him to the French nation; and losing him as their head inclined them to conciliatory measures, and the royalists at length proposed terms of peace, wholly favorable to the Huguenots, by whom they were gladly accepted; for they afterwards confessed, that, beset by famine and sickness, they could not have held out three months longer.

Thus ended this memorable siege, which had been prolonged nine months. The royal army, composed of the best troops and chief nobility of France, had lost forty thousand men by disease and casualty. The expense was immense, and the King in reality gained not a single advantage. Such is war in its failure; it is only in its success that it is loaded with worldly honors.

Notwithstanding the bravery of the inhabitants of Rochelle, much of their good fortune was to be attributed to the local situation of the town, and the strength of its fortifications. Placed at the head of a noble bay, sheltered from every wind, and so spacious that it might contain all the navies in the world, it was yet protected by its own small harbour, which admitted vessels of

the heaviest burden. Two forts guarded its entrance, and between them a chain of prodigious strength was thrown across. On every other side were erected massive walls, flanked with lofty towers at short distances. To complete the security of the place, the tide flowed round it twice a day, and, when it was expedient, flood-gates were closed to retain the water. With the present relief of the brave Huguenots, we turn to another portion of our history, and once more enter the Louvre, the abode of Charles and Catharine de Medicis.

CHAPTER XII.

DEATH OF CHARLES THE NINTH.

THE Louvre, at this time, was rather more like a fortress than a palace. It did not become the residence of the Kings of France till the reign of Charles the Ninth. Francis the First and Henry the Second had occasionally resided in it, and, as was natural, had added decorations according to their own taste. Francis often gave splendid entertainments in this palace; but the external aspect of it was not changed by the gallantry and festivities within. It looked more like a prison than a royal abode. It was composed of Gothic towers, surrounded with a deep and wide ditch, across which were thrown bridges and huge gates. Henry, his successor, usually resided at the palace of the Tournelles. It was there the tournament was held, which occasioned his premature death.

On that occasion, Catharine de Medicis, the cruel abettor of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, seems to have shown human feeling; but, taking into view the events of her life, we are

rather inclined to believe that superstition mingled with the horror with which she contemplated her husband's dead body, laid in state in the very hall where the event took place, and the gaudy and glittering hangings and ornaments, exchanged for funeral torches, black cloth, altars, and services for the dead. With a violence consistent with her character, she ordered it to be razed to its foundation, and all the grounds and gardens to be destroyed. From that time she had usually inhabited the Louvre. It was now particularly calculated for her purposes ; its ditches, and draw-bridges were soon to be in requisition. From the year 1564 she had been engaged in building the palace of the Tuileries, for her own particular residence.

It must be remembered, that she sprang from the family of the Medici, and inherited their taste for the arts. She was shocked with the barbarous specimens of architecture which she found at Paris, and determined to raise one magnificent edifice on the model of ancient Greece.

As soon as the Duke of Anjou had sufficiently recovered his health, splendid preparations were made for his coronation. At this time there seems to have been a change in his character ; he grew languid and indifferent on the subject of his accession to the crown of Poland, and required the determined and constant energy of his

ambitious mother to spur him on. At the end of a few months, however, the new King of Poland took his departure, accompanied to the confines of Lorraine by his mother, Charles, and the nobility of the Court.

After the departure of Henry, Francis, Duke of Alençon, though still very young, began to claim, with the title of Anjou, the posts and honors of the kingdom, assigned to his brother. But he was an object of suspicion to the Court, on account of the favor he had shown to the reformed party, and his avowed love and regret for Coligni.

A treaty had been formed by Catharine for the marriage of the Duke of Anjou with Elizabeth, Queen of England. That wily maiden, after holding him in suspense for a long time, and exercising the experience of forty over the ambitious views of a youth of not much more than half her own age, at length wearied him out, and he gave up the pursuit.

When Alençon had pleaded hard for promotion, and the posts his brother had held before his election to the Polish throne, Catharine informed him, that, with that maternal love which had always actuated her, she had formed a plan for his advancement, that would raise him far above the King of Poland.

“What is it?” said Alençon, who was the

only one of Catharine's children that was not immediately under her control.

"The hand of the Queen of England," replied Catharine, solemnly; "though refused to Anjou, I have secret reasons for believing you will be a successful suitor."

The loud and uncontrollable burst of laughter which followed this grave proposal, which Alençon fully understood as a *ruse de guerre*, greatly incensed Catharine, and she immediately ordered the boy from her presence. He hastened to his confidential friend, Henry of Navarre, and disclosed the *secret of state*, with all the boisterous mirth for which he was distinguished, advising him to get a divorce from his sister Margaret, and tilt with him for his Protestant Queen.

Catharine had overrated the inexperience and thoughtlessness of Alençon. He saw at once, by this absurd proposal, that she merely meant to feed him with hopes, and he determined to throw off all restraint. The Huguenots were soon informed of his state of mind, and offered him the command of their party, telling him, that, by becoming the head of it, he would soon be more absolute than Charles could make him.

The plan was speedily laid, and, owing to the sickness of Charles, Alençon had opportunity for his operations. Catharine, however, was ever on the watch, and had placed vigilant spies about the

Court. She soon perceived that the mind of her youngest son was agitated by projects, and she cunningly drew from him observations, confirming her suspicions that not only he, but Navarre and Condé, were ripe for rebellion. Her first step was to arrest them all as prisoners of state, and confine them in the Louvre, causing the gates to be closed and guarded. Condé, by some chance, escaped. This was termed a conspiracy, and many were put to death.

Though the Huguenots were disappointed in the hope of securing Alençon for their head, yet, hearing of the severities practised at Court upon their friends and favorers, they again appeared in arms in many parts of France. La Nouë, who had honorably fulfilled his engagements with Charles, and at the same time was in the confidence of the Huguenots, took the command of one section of the army, and Montgomery of another. The latter was taken prisoner, and conveyed to Paris. Catharine no sooner understood that he was in her power, than she ordered his execution.

When Catharine found that Condé had escaped, she turned all her art towards Navarre, hoping to prevail on him to confess who were the chief contrivers of the plan. He at once refused to compromise any one, but offered to give his answer in writing.

Margaret, his wife, seems at this time to have interested herself in his cause, and, on this occasion, became his secretary. What he dictated she wrote with grace and skill. So far from giving them any new light, Henry turned upon his accusers, enumerated the injuries he had sustained, and deplored the loss of his dearest friends. Alençon, when questioned, appears to have met the accusers with scoffs and disdain ; he told them he was willing to give them any information that would set their minds at rest, and was condemned for his boyish behaviour, as he actually exaggerated his own intentions.

Both of the Princes were made prisoners ; but Catharine, to avoid any imputation of the kind, conveyed them with her (though sufficiently guarded) to the different palaces. At the Tuileries, she exhibited them both as equally her beloved children.

The life of Charles was now fast drawing to a close. His illness excited various suspicions in that superstitious age. Some affirmed, that magicians, by their arts, had produced his decline ; others declared a poison was administered. As he labored under an affection of the lungs with some other diseases, probably his death was a natural one. Of his mental agony, there seems to be no doubt.

Let us, in imagination, behold him in his last

sickness, attended by a faithful nurse, who had borne him in her arms in his infancy. "Come nearer, nearer," said he to her, in a hoarse voice. "Do you see that ghastly figure? look at that wound! he is dying! it was I that shot him! O, I have followed wicked advice!"

"It was those that counselled you, that were to blame," said the poor woman, willing to offer consolation; "you never would have done such deeds of yourself."

"My God, pardon me!" he again exclaimed; "be merciful! where will this end? I am lost, — lost for ever!"

His eyes wandered round the apartment, as if following some terrifying object. They rested on his mother, who, at that moment, entered. He shuddered and closed them. For several days he refused to look upon her.

What are the pangs of approaching dissolution, the laboring breath, the icy limbs, the failing sight, compared to the overwhelming agony of remorse! In vain his affectionate nurse repeated again and again, "Sire, be the murders on those who forced you to them;" his own heart was his accuser, and lay open to him, at this solemn moment.

As he grew weaker, his agony became less acute. He asked his mother not to leave him,

held her hand fast in his, and died, on the 30th of May, at the early age of twenty-five.

By his will, his mother was left sole Regent, till the arrival of his brother from Poland, who was his lawful successor.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW KING.

THE King of Poland no sooner heard of his brother's death, than he determined to make his escape, and return to France. This conduct was every way disgraceful, and gives us the first idea of the part he was to act upon the theatre of life.

The greatest expectations were formed by the French royalists on the subject of Henry the Third. He was in the bloom of youth, having scarcely attained the age of twenty-three and had already signalized himself by his courage and noble bearing. He had acquired great military fame in the battles against the Huguenots. His figure was fine, his manner dignified and amiable, and his eloquence uncommon. He had been present at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and, notwithstanding his youth, bore a part in those cruelties, which, among the royalists, won him applause. The nation were looking towards him as a hero and a monarch, that would heap glory upon them. Even the Huguenots entertained

hopes, that, by pursuing conciliatory measures, he would unite them to their lawful sovereign.

Perhaps he might have adopted such measures, but for the baneful counsels of Catharine. But she assured him, that it was his best policy to continue the war, and this unfortunate course was pursued.

It soon, however, became obvious, that Henry the Third was a totally different character from the Duke of Anjou. This change seems to be truly wonderful. That a bold, daring, high-spirited youth, should change his whole character at the age of twenty-three, appears incredible. The fact is asserted by every historian, and no attempt made to account for it. A simple and not improbable cause has been suggested. He had received a severe wound immediately before his departure for Poland, at the siege of Rochelle. It has been already mentioned, that his ardor for his new kingdom abated, and he was only stimulated to take possession of it by his mother. It would seem from the time of his wound and illness that his character changed, and, therefore, it may be attributed to physical causes. We all know how the nerves may be shattered, and what a total exhaustion of the constitution may take place from violent and sudden disease or accident. The mind loses its power and energy. The new King, instead of being interested in affairs of

state, intrenched himself in his palace, surrounded by parasites. He professed a sudden and violent passion for Louise de Vaudemont ; but she seems to have had but little power over him, and was only a beautiful pageant when he reclined in a barge, richly decorated, and sailed on the river Saone. Her virtue and good sense might have secured the lasting affection of a wiser man.

About this time, all Paris was in commotion at a pious procession, which walked through the streets. They were so completely disguised by their dress, that no individual could be known. Clothed in large sacks, with places cut for the eyes and the feet, and a large red cross on the shoulder, they patrolled all the principal streets, much to the edification of pious Catholics. It was soon known, that the King was the head and originator of this Order, which took the name of *Penitents*, from an Order of the kind in Avignon. It must have been amusing to see the King and nobles withdraw from their penitentiary sacks, and seat themselves at their luxurious feasts.

One of the most distinguished of the Court paid dear for this mummary. Cardinal Lorraine, not willing to be outdone by his monarch in acts of penitence, followed him, bare-headed, on a cold December evening, with "his feet shod in scanty sandals," holding a crucifix aloft. He took a violent cold, which terminated his exist-

ence in his fiftieth year. The night of his death is described as peculiarly tempestuous ; a storm raged without, with uncommon violence ; but, amidst the howling of the blast and the roar of the elements, the ravings of the Cardinal could be heard in the distant apartments of the palace. So dreadful were his imprecations, that some of his superstitious attendants maintained, that hosts of the spirits of darkness came to conduct the parting soul to their realms, with shouts of welcome.

The death of the Cardinal was a relief to Henry, who feared his influence, and had delayed his marriage with Louise, who was a relative of the Cardinal, lest it might increase the power of the Guises. By his death, this fear was removed, and the unfortunate girl was torn from her lover, to whom she was tenderly attached, and doomed to aggrandize her family by the sacrifice of her own happiness. It was strikingly characteristic of the King's present character, that, on the morning of his nuptials, he was so much occupied with his own and his bride's decorations, that the ceremony was not only deferred beyond the time appointed, but even some of the chantings were obliged to be omitted from the prolonged delay of the royal ceremony. The trappings and brilliant jewels of France poorly concealed the secret sorrow of the young bride, whose pale face and gushing tears told her tale of woe.

The Duke of Alençon had been quieted by the hopes of obtaining the crown of Poland, which his brother had relinquished ; but this nation were too much dissatisfied with the conduct of Catharine and Henry to receive a second monarch from them, and elected Stephano Balthori to that honor, a Hungarian of great fame and valor.

Alençon, thoroughly disgusted with the duplicity that had been used towards him by his nearest relations, determined to escape from the Court, where he was scrupulously guarded, with the King of Navarre. Late at night, on pretence of visiting a female friend, he left the Tuileries, where he was then residing, accompanied by gentlemen, who were in fact guards appointed by the Queen. The lady resided near one of the Fauxbourgs of St. Marceau. He desired his attendants to wait in the street, and entered the house. He passed through it, as had been previously concerted, and, issuing from a private door, made his way to the gate, where he met a horse in readiness, which he mounted and rode to Dreux, a city under his command. He then wrote a manifesto, inviting all discontented parties to repair to his standard, and a particular clause for the Huguenots.

The dismay of Catharine and Henry was extreme, when they learned the escape of Alençon.

Immediate search was made for him. "Dead or alive," said Henry, "he must be brought back ; he is about to kindle the flames of war in my dominions." Finding him wholly beyond his reach, he offered bribes and the most urgent solicitations to him to return.

In the mean time, Catharine, fully aware that Navarre only wanted a similar opportunity to escape, turned all her attention towards reconciling him to his captivity. The most splendid and expensive *fêtes* were given, attended by the syrens of the Court ; and Margaret is said to have willingly assisted her mother in the snares laid for the too yielding Navarre.

The Duke of Alençon (or Anjou as he was now called, having taken the former title of the King) had always been inaccessible to the flattery and beguilements of his mother. He had no taste for the more refined and studied licentiousness of Catharine's court, but sought his amusements elsewhere. He would not conform to the etiquette of court dress, now become necessary under the auspices of Henry the Third. The materials were most costly, gold, silver, and brocaded stuffs, and the fashion was said to be continually fluctuating. La Nouë complained, that all distinctive marks of dress were broken down. He says, coblers wear gilt swords and silk stockings, the last a piece of elegance that Henry

the Second never knew in his whole life. At any continuation of festivals, the noblemen and ladies were ordered by the King to appear in a new dress every day.

Francis the First, with his taste for chivalry, could not be unmindful of a becoming costume. He wore a hat, as he is often pictured, decorated with white plumes and precious stones, the brim turned up in front with a huge diamond. Henry the Second changed the pageantry of the hat for a bonnet or cap. Henry the Third substituted in its place a toque, resembling a turban. The toque was composed of velvet, richly adorned with jewels, and fantastically brought over one ear, leaving the other exposed, in which was hung an Orient pearl or diamond of great value. He always wore ear-rings, which, of course, became a universal custom among all classes, and even to this day is not wholly abandoned by Frenchmen.

White ruffs, curiously plaited, were worn in Charles's time, but Henry adopted the little Italian collars, turned over to show the neck. Gold chains were generally worn by the nobility, and were a choice present of Henry to his favorites.

Margaret of Valois was distinguished for the elegance of her costume, both before and after her marriage with the King of Navarre. Though

she required no aid of art, being singularly beautiful, yet, with the superfluity of modern invention, she often wore false hair and paint ; perhaps, however, as a disguise, for she sometimes had recourse to such subterfuges. She always travelled masked, but probably this was to defend her complexion from sun and wind.

Henry of Navarre wore at his nuptials a uniform of pale yellow satin, covered with the richest embroidery, wrought in relief, and decorated with pearls and precious stones. One of the Queen of Navarre's gowns was black satin, covered with embroidery, which cost from four to five hundred crowns.

It is amusing to observe in every age the ingenuity of dress in changing the human figure. It was the fashion to be tall, and those ladies, who were below the proper standard, raised themselves by what they called pattens, made of cork ; the petticoats being so extremely long as entirely to cover the feet. They were often raised by their pattens several inches above the ground. The mourning of that period was black, white, and gray, with violet or blue stockings. They were not allowed to wear precious stones, except upon their fingers ; but they might wear pearls on their necks and arms. Margaret was obliged to wear mourning for Jane, her husband's mother, and to give up her gemmed ear-rings ; but she

substituted in their stead pendants, in the shape of human skulls, made of ivory, and chaplets of the same.

We cannot but remark, how much earlier extreme luxury was introduced, than real comfort and convenience. When Henry changed his place of residence, it was necessary to remove the tapestries, and part of the furniture for his apartments, they were so scantily supplied. The want of neatness is spoken of by their own historians. La Nouë says, "They bring tapestries from Flanders, and beds from Milan, but the nobles ought to be ashamed to keep their rooms so filthy." The fauteuils, or chairs, for which the French are now so remarkable, were not then seen, even in the palaces of princes. They used a species of benches, and Brantôme, the historian, calls them chests or trunks. Under Henry the Third, arm-chairs were invented, but were confined to the Court.

Perhaps there is nothing which marks the progress of true refinement more, than the consistency, order, neatness, elegance, and comfort, of the mansions of the wealthy. With all the luxury of Henry's Court, there was a remarkable want of consistency in the arrangements.

The flight of Alençon was too important an event, not to rouse all the energies of the Queen-mother; and while she intrusted to Margaret the

care of amusing and beguiling Navarre, and making his imprisonment a pastime, she judged it expedient to follow Alençon, and endeavour to win him back.

Though there was but little true affection between Henry of Navarre and Margaret, his generous and open character, with his manly and noble disposition, won, in some measure, her interest.

Hitherto, theatrical exhibitions, though sometimes got up, were of the most puerile and ordinary kind ; but a company of Italian comedians had arrived, and a theatre was opened in the palace of Bourbon, near the Louvre. Margaret, delighted with this amusement, prevailed on her husband to accompany her. Peori, one of the principal actors, no sooner found that Navarre was present, than he secretly obtained an interview with the Prince, and informed him, that, on his way through the provinces, he and his company had been captured by the Huguenots, and had been ransomed by Henry the Third ; that he was intrusted with private papers, and took that opportunity to deliver them into his hands. Though of but little real import, as valuable documents would hardly have been intrusted to such a messenger, they were enough to rouse the sleeping desire of Henry to be once more among his people ; and, on his return, he communicated

to Margare't his resolution to escape, and conjured her, as she valued his peace of mind, to assist him.

"Now," said Margaret, "you have adopted the right method. Had you made me prime minister, as my mother has done, you would have secured me to your cause."

Catharine obtained several interviews with Anjou, and also with some of the principal Huguenots, and at length, by large concessions, obtained a truce from all hostilities for six months. On her return, she found the affairs of the Court in a deplorable state. The King had demanded supplies, and received an unceremonious refusal, with a spirited remonstrance, from the city authorities, upon the venality, the luxury, and the rapacity of the Court. Henry, though greatly enraged at this return, instead of the supplies he had exacted, was too well trained by his mother to discover his indignation, and civilly dismissed the deputies.

In the mean time, Margaret determined to effect her husband's liberation, and perhaps secure to herself a more entire independence. She therefore proposed to her mother, that herself, with the ladies of the Court, should join the hunting-parties of Navarre, which he was allowed, under a strict guard. This arrangement lulled the fears of the Queen-mother, who saw little danger of the young

Prince's escape, while attended by the beautiful *Daielle* and Canavalet, women by whose fascinations he was bound. A bad cold and fever confined Margaret to her bed on the day of one of these excursions, and, as had been previously concerted by him and the *Sieur de Fervaques*, accompanied by a few friends, Navarre set out in the morning, under pretence of hunting the stag. Having dexterously evaded those attendants who were not in his interest, he rode rapidly forward, and plunged into the river below Paissy ; then, proceeding by a circuitous route, he reached his own government of Guyenne. Here, sheltered by thick forests, he felt a degree of security. The Duke of Sully, who was then a mere boy in his suite, followed him.

When he emerged from the wood and found himself on the banks of the Loire near the bridge of Saumur, he thanked God for his deliverance. "In Paris," said he, "they have made way with my mother ; they have murdered the brave Coligni and our devoted friends, and, but for the mercy of Heaven, they would have done the same by me. I will never return with life, unless I return free."

"Is there nothing, Sire, that you leave behind with regret ?" inquired *Fervaques*, alluding to the ladies of the Court.

"But two things," replied Henry, smiling ;

“the mass, and my wife ; the first, I must contrive to do without ; my wife, I must see again.”

It may be doubted, whether one held a much higher place in his esteem than the other. The conduct of Margaret had been such as to alienate her husband, and probably his absence was the thing she most desired, though she complained that he did not take leave of her, she being ill with a cold.

In passing through Tours, he made a public profession of the reformed faith, candidly avowing, that he had been present at the mass, and taken other steps, merely to save his life.

Navarre immediately held a conference with the Duke of Anjou, and also with the Duke Casimir, son of the Elector Palatine, who had formed a confederacy with the Huguenots. Condé, too, was amongst them, the friend and companion of Navarre, and was now at the head of a large number of brave soldiers. Since his escape, when arrested with Navarre for an alleged conspiracy, he had been active in uniting the scattered troops. His clear and cool judgment immediately perceived, that the only way to make Monsieur the Duke of Anjou useful to their cause, was to place him in powerful opposition to Henry, and he voluntarily surrendered his command to the Prince. A numerous army, certainly not less than fifty thousand men, were now

collected with Navarre, D'Alençon, and Casimir, as chiefs.

When we consider the youth of these generals, the ardor and impetuosity of their characters, the advantage they had gained over the French king, who had neither men nor money, and whose effeminate habits unfitted him for all exertion, we might augur the success of the allied forces.

CHAPTER XIV.

CATHARINE OF BOURBON.

HENRY of Navarre's first thought when he found himself free, was, to have his only sister, Catharine, under his protection. Since the death of her mother, she had resided at the Court of France, and, though of a gay and lively turn of mind, had, by the counsels of her brother, declined mingling in the revels of the palace, devoting herself to innocent and useful pursuits, and the attainment of modern accomplishments. Secluded, however, as she had lived, the Count de Soissons discovered that the palace contained this treasure. He had first seen her rapidly passing through the apartments, and, at length, petitioned Navarre for an introduction. As he professed the warmest interest in the Huguenot cause, as well as personal friendship for the house of Navarre, the request was a natural one. Henry's nature was wholly unsuspecting; and, though he might have been warned by the many weaknesses of his own heart, he did not, for a moment, suspect that he was presenting a lover to his sister.

Such, however, it proved to be ; and the Count, whether or not he surrendered disinterestedly his own affections, easily perceived, that he had won those of Catharine. This young Princess was not unworthy of the line whence she sprang, and inherited many of the virtues of her noble mother. Ardent and generous in her disposition, to love once was, in her full belief, to love always. The Count saw, that there was no necessity for bonds or oaths ; and when, in consequence of her brother's summons, which the Queen-mother had no pretence to resist, she took her departure from the brilliant Court of France, she felt that no human power could sever her from him.

The Count knew more of the policy of nations and kings. The young Rosney, Duke of Sully, was the messenger of Navarre, appointed to conduct Catharine to her brother. Previously to her departure, the Count obtained an interview. He found her radiant with smiles, and sparkling with vivacity. "Is it thus," said he, "you leave me ? How different are your emotions from mine. My heart dies within me when I reflect that you may be sacrificed to ambitious schemes, and even Navarre urge you to this self-sacrifice."

"Now, indeed," said Catharine, gayly, "I am angry with you ; you may, if you please, in lover-

like language, doubt *my* constancy, and imagine that all the world covets your treasure; but that you should for a moment suspect my high-minded brother of controlling my inclination, is unworthy of him and yourself. My mother, on her death-bed, left her injunctions to Navarre, that I should never marry but with my free consent. What wouldst thou have more," added she, leaning forward, and presenting her hand. "Farewell, faithless one; when we meet again, I will shame thee for thy unbelief." With a light step she quitted the apartment, as the Count, issuing from it by another door, joined the train who were assembled to take leave of the young Princess.

While Catharine, with the grace for which she was distinguished, bowed to one, kissed her hand to another, and lavished sunny smiles on a third, for the Count de Soissons, alone, was reserved that expression of sensibility, of tenderness, of confiding truth, that promises all. There was no gloom, scarce a parting regret, to cloud her fair white brow. A female friend and companion accompanied her. There had been no congeniality between the Queen-mother, Margaret, and herself. She was going to a brother, who had recovered his liberty and his kingdom, and she only waited for a propitious moment of rest, to tell him that her choice was made, and

ask his benediction. Such is the picture of youth, before stern reality has blighted its anticipations.

The state of the French nation, at this time, was truly forlorn. Henry would gladly have retired to a monastery, and spent the remainder of his days in licentious revelry and superstitious and fanatical atonements. In the midst of the civil war which hung over him, he was wholly engrossed by his dogs, and by his favorites, young men of low and dissipated habits, who flattered his foibles, and administered to his follies. The dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew had driven from France many of its most valuable artisans and mechanics. The doctrines of the Reformation had spread among a race of independent, thinking men; and many such had fled from France, withdrawing the great wealth of the nation, their powers and resources. What the French nation lost, other nations gained. England, Germany, Switzerland, and Holland had afforded an asylum to a firm, active, noble-minded race of laborers and mechanics, and France had drained itself, not only of its blood, but of this its best treasure. What Henry could not comprehend, the vigorous mind of Catharine de Medicis at once perceived, that a civil war at this crisis would be ruinous to the royalists, and she considered that no promises or

concessions ought to be spared that might gain back her son, break the confederacy, and secure a peace. It is unnecessary to recapitulate the terms offered. Had they been observed, the war of the Huguenots would have been at an end. Little as the heads of the confederacy could trust to her faith, they were again induced to rely on it. She had the address to make them lay down their arms, and sign a peace, which was called "La paix de Monsieur."

A short time proved, that the conditions were not meant to be observed ; and Catharine plainly avowed, that they were only made to break up the confederacy, and withdraw her son from the dangerous alliance. She actually denied that she promised any thing.

In the evil which threatened Catharine, she seems to have lost sight of a still more fatal one, that was now forming in the heart of the kingdom. The young Duke of Guise inherited the talents and ambition of his father. He had studied the state of the nation, and saw that, exclusive of the Huguenot party, it was convulsed by different factions. He at once perceived, that, if he could unite these disaffected bodies, and place himself at the head of them, he might wield an engine, more powerful than royalty itself. While with consummate art he veiled the real design of this union, he caused it to be rep-

resented, that the time had arrived when all must form a defensive league for the crown, and the civil and religious rights of the nation.

It was not long, before the King received intelligence of the formation of the league, and its true import, which was, to create a power superior to all others, of which the Duke of Guise was to be the head. Though the league professed to guard scrupulously the Catholic religion, and crush all heretics, it was so worded, that it might direct its reforming powers to any object, however unconnected with religion. The confederates bound themselves, by solemn oaths, "to dedicate their lives and fortunes to the suppression of any opponents of the league, to obtain the fulfilment of its conditions, and to consider any one, who did not unite with them, as a traitor, and a renegade from God ; and to assure its agents, that they might take all steps to enforce it with impunity ; and, above all, they were to promise unconditional obedience to the chief, who had power to punish the negligent and refractory as he pleased."

A more arbitrary scheme could scarcely be invented. A vigorous king would at once have taken measures to crush such a confederacy ; but Henry, trembling at the threatening form it assumed, had recourse to a step which betrayed his weakness ; he immediately came forward, and

advocated the league, and not only signed it, but declared himself its head, to the exclusion of Guise.

This step, so decided, in which he bound himself not only to banish the reformed religion, but to produce a uniformity throughout the nation, convinced the Huguenots they had no measures to keep. Henry had refused to ratify the "Peace of Monsieur," and they now saw, in their king, merely the head of a cabal. Hitherto they had contended only for the toleration of their religion; but the present state of things changed their position, and they determined to form counter-leagues with England and the Protestants of Germany. Navarre was declared general, and Condé his lieutenant-general.

Two royal armies took the field; one under the command of the Duke of Anjou, now a bitter foe to the Reformation, the other under the command of the Duke of Mayenne, younger brother of the Duke of Guise. To the elder brother, Henry feared to give the command of so powerful an army.

The royalists were successful in their enterprise. The Huguenots, weakened by internal jealousies, distrusted each other. Many Catholics enlisted under Navarre. Indeed, his army was made up of all nations and religions, and of soldiers who fought for pay. The austerity of

the Calvinists poorly brooked this proximity. Some distrusted Condé, and one place after another surrendered to the Dukes of Mayenne and Anjou.

The King, instead of pursuing victory, yielded to the effeminacy of his habits and to his narrow finances, which could ill support a war, and furnish him with luxuries. He proposed a peace. Navarre was too wise to reject it, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Beza, the ancient friend of Calvin, who wrote an earnest letter to him, urging him to reject the terms offered. The treaty was signed at Bergerac. The news reached Condé at Rochelle, in the dead of the night. He would not wait till morning, but ordered it to be proclaimed by torch-light. La Nouë was despatched by Navarre to Languedoc ; and when he arrived at Montpellier, he discovered two bodies of troops, just rushing to battle. He ordered his courier to blow a loud and fearful blast, and, galloping forward at full speed, dashed between the ranks, and, holding up the treaty, shouted, "Peace ! Peace !"

The terms of this peace were far from satisfactory to the Huguenots ; but, under existing circumstances, they were more favorable than could have been expected.

It may not be amiss, at this period, to give some account of the ninth national Synod of the

Reformed churches of France. The education of youth was there strongly enforced ; but a rogue, deposed from the ministry for clipping coin, was recommended as a teacher, on account of his poverty and numerous family of children, though great watchfulness over him was enjoined. Frequent catechizing is recommended ; short, plain, and familiar questions and answers, accommodating themselves to the capacity of the people. They were recommended to preach short sermons, and not dwell too long upon a text. Both sexes are required to observe great modesty in their manner of wearing their hair, and were forbidden to put into verse, or poems, Scripture stories, unless they confined themselves strictly to Scripture terms. Sumptuary laws were enacted, and endeavours made to restore the old Calvinistic, or, what the English call, Puritanic system, in its fullest extent.

Henry the Third, by this period of tranquillity, was left to indulge himself in his favorite amusements. The Court had become a scene of most disgusting exhibitions. *Fêtes* were given, in which the King appeared dressed like an Amazon, and sometimes clad in a female court-dress, his neck open, his throat encircled with pearls, and his hair curled in ringlets. His favorites were chosen according to his own caprice, from some imaginary attraction, without regard to birth or

character ; and their vulgar insolence often occasioned fierce quarrels with the *noblesse*, in which the King always took their part. Three of his *minions* (for by this epithet his favorites were known), Quelvis, Mangiron, and Livarot, fell in duels. The King expressed the most violent affliction, took the earrings out of his dead favorites' ears, and placed them in his own. The contempt which the nation felt for him was ill disguised ; and all turned their hopes towards the Duke of Guise, who was not slow to take advantage of their total alienation from the monarch.

Catharine, in the mean time, began to affect great regret, that her daughter Margaret, should be thus separated from Navarre, for they had never met since his escape ; and, under pretence of conducting her to her husband, prepared for a visit to him. This step was acceded to by Margaret, as her stay at the court had become unpleasant, owing to the alienation which existed between her brother, the King, and herself.

Monsieur, Duke of Anjou, who had returned from his successful campaign against the Huguenots, now resided at the Louvre. He excited the jealousy of the King by his deportment, who conceived suspicions that he had designs on his life. There does not appear to have been any foundation for this idea, which was un-

doubtedly suggested to Henry by evil-minded persons, who hated Anjou. There was little to love in this Prince ; his personal appearance was repulsive, and, except his affection for the good and virtuous Coligni, which seems to have been sincere, notwithstanding it was attributed to political motives, we hardly find a redeeming point in his disposition.

The opinion the King of Navarre entertained of the character of Anjou ought to have weight, as he was a fellow-prisoner with him at the Louvre, and often his confidant. "He will deceive me," said he, "if he ever fulfils the expectations conceived of him" (by the United Provinces, who had solicited him to take command of their army) ; "he has so little courage, a heart so double and malignant, that I cannot persuade myself that he will ever do any thing that is great."

The suspicions entertained by the King induced him to place a guard over his brother, to prevent his escape. This he however effected a second time, by the aid of Margaret. She let him down by means of ropes from the window of her apartment, on the second story, which overlooked the palace *fosse*.

This defiance of the King, with her imprudent and even shameless conduct, had long occasioned violent reproaches between them, where

both could retaliate on each other the most offensive charges ; but this last act, of contriving her brother's escape, rendered her abode at the palace extremely uncomfortable, Henry treating her with marked contempt, and forbidding her his presence. She therefore acceded to her mother's plan, of returning to her husband. For this purpose she had a splendid chariot built, gilt on the outside, and the inside lined with yellow velvet, edged with silver.

Though Henry received his wife with civility, he could neither love nor respect her. Catharine de Medicis brought with her a numerous suite, and no one doubted that her object was merely a political one. She endeavoured to prevail on Navarre to come to Paris ; but he wholly rejected the idea.

Though the visit was made in consequence of the peace, petty hostilities on both sides constantly took place. The Queen-mother held her Court near, and often both Courts were assembled at the same place. The most splendid festivals were given on both sides, and the utmost politeness and deference were observed within prescribed boundaries. Continual causes of discontent, however, were arising, from the intrigues of Catharine, and Navarre was not slow in making reprisals.

The two Courts met at Auch upon the occasion

of a splendid ball, given by Catharine de Medicis. Henry of Navarre had, from some circumstance, suspicions, which kept him alive to the Queen-mother's movements. That night he received intelligence, that La Réolle was delivered by the governor to the Catholics. He appeared as usual at the ball, and Catharine felt confident that he had no suspicion of her intrigues. He had, however, arranged his plans, and, late at night, while the revelry was at its height, privately withdrew to a neighbouring field, where, a number of men joining him, they marched all night to Fleurance, entered the gates, and took possession of the place. The next morning he sent the intelligence to her. "I see," said she, "this is in revenge for La Réole. The King of Navarre was resolved to have nut for nut, but mine is the better kernelled."

Whatever were her views in this visit, she determined, if possible, to accomplish them; and, while she joined in the splendid circles of the Court, with a spirit that even the young could scarcely emulate, on the other hand, she held private interviews with the Calvinistic ministers, and studied the Scripture vocabulary, that she might accommodate herself to their language. The unsuspecting ministers were some of them wholly astonished to find a woman renowned for her worldliness addressing them in their own

language. "Ye have come," said she to them, "as messengers of peace; the blessing of David, the Lord's anointed, be upon you. Declare your glad tidings, and I, as a mother in Israel, will listen." Some of the simple-hearted men were surprised, that such mistakes had gone abroad concerning the character of this mother in Israel. She accomplished, however, but little. Navarre was constantly on his guard, and with a suspicion wholly foreign to his generous and confiding character, kept up the closest inspection of her movements. At length, perceiving she could gain no advantage by remaining there, and could not succeed in persuading Navarre to return to Paris, she took leave of him.

The young sister of Navarre had been received on her return by the Huguenots with the warmest affection, which she repaid to its fullest extent. Under the protection of her brother she no longer checked her natural vivacity, and love of amusement, suitable to her age. Sully mentions, that she included *him*, though then very young, in all her parties, and kindly taught him herself the steps of a dance in a ballet that was performed with a great deal of magnificence. Yet, amidst the fascinations of a court, she remembered the early injunctions of her mother, and not only made an open profession of the reformed religion, but sought to lighten the burden of pov-

erty which fell on many of the aged ministers of the cause. Navarre had seen too much of the intriguing spirit of Catharine de Medicis, and of his wife's enterprising and unrestrained temper, not to dread that his sister should participate in any political cabals. Indeed, he entertained for her a tenderness that would willingly have shielded her from sorrow or disappointment. The Count de Soissons, soon after her return, repaired to Bearne and made known his pretensions to Henry, professing the strongest attachment to him, as well as to his sister. But, as he was a Catholic, and in the service of the King, Navarre did not yield a ready assent. Catharine, who possessed her mother's strength of feeling, informed him, without disguise, that the Count had won her heart, and besought him to yield his free and unqualified assent to their union. Henry affectionately assured her, that her happiness should be his first object, and, when fully convinced that the Count de Soissons would best promote it, with his own hand he would bestow her upon that nobleman.

"Remember," said Catharine, "my mother's last injunction, that I should marry with my own free consent."

"I do," said Navarre with a sigh, "but you forget one clause, — a *Protestant* nobleman."

"The Count is a Protestant in his heart," replied Catharine triumphantly.

"Then what prevents his renouncing the mass?" exclaimed Henry.

"Ah, brother," said Catharine, "can we ask that question? we who have been forced to draw near with our lips when our hearts were far away?"

"I assure you," replied Henry, his color heightening at this touching appeal, "that I want nothing but a fuller conviction of De Soissons' sincerity, to fulfil all you ask."

"Is it possible you can doubt that?" said Catharine, with vivacity. "I have ten thousand proofs of it!"

"Well," replied Henry, smiling, "I only ask *one*, a firm devotion to the reformed cause."

"And is this the only condition upon which you will give your consent? Supposing he is a Catholic at heart, which I am sure he is not, can you blame a nobleman who adheres to the religion in which he was born and bred, and which is the religion of his King and country?"

"Take care, my little sister," said Henry, "that in defence of your admirer you do not turn Papist yourself; but I will honestly answer your question, for it is a fair one; I should not blame such a person, but De Soissons does not take this stand; you say you believe he is a Protestant, and I will not disguise that he has given me hopes that he will join us with his party."

“If he should,” said Catharine, “you will no longer talk in this cold manner ; you will give your full consent to our union.”

“My dear sister,” replied Navarre, with earnestness, “though I am yet young in years, I have lived long enough to see myself disappointed in all my favorite prospects. I have but one treasure left, and shall I not guard it most carefully ? The Count is discontented with the Court, and he earnestly desires to win you. I must find that he is worthy of you before I can yield to him the only treasure that remains to me. But trust to my true affection.”

Shortly after this conversation De Soissons gave Henry intimation, that he was ready to join the Protestants, and requested him to send a body of troops to facilitate his passage over the Loire.

Catharine considered this step decisive for her happiness, and, in perfect security that no further obstacle could intervene, gave herself up to the unclouded anticipation of domestic enjoyment. Little as was the confidence between herself and the Queen of Navarre, she could not refrain from expressing her feelings.

Margaret smiled contemptuously. “When was it ever known,” said she, “that a princess was happy ? Had you been born in poverty, a poor outcast, toiling for your daily subsistence, or living indolently on roots and herbs, there

might have been a chance of your marrying the man of your choice. But a princess, the daughter of a Queen, look for happiness in wedded life!" and she shrugged her shoulders, and gave a sarcastic laugh.

"But surely something depends on ourselves," said Catharine timidly.

"Nothing," replied Margaret emphatically. "Our plans may be laid with all the skill of human wisdom; they may be so nicely adjusted in all their parts, that it shall seem next to an impossibility they should fail; yet, when we least expect it, they will be overthrown, and we be left among the ruins." A tear started to her eye, but even to the unpractised observation of Catharine there was in her emotion more of temper than feeling.

"I did not mean exactly that," said Catharine, "it is not *plans* I was alluding to, but our own truth and constancy. No one can compel us to change the object of our faithful affection." •

"That may be true," said the Queen; "and yet motives may be strong enough to compel us to act as if we had."

"Never;" said Catharine with fervor, "nothing ought to compel us but finding the object unworthy, and then affection will die a natural death."

"If that is all," said Margaret bitterly, "it will die in infancy and never live to grow up."

Catharine turned slowly away; her tender and

feeling heart rejected the cold, sarcastic language of the Queen. She thought of her brother's lot, and lamented that he had had no opportunity of cultivating the highest and noblest propensities of human nature. "A wife unloving and unloved ! Well may he say, he has been disappointed in all his favorite prospects. O," said she fervently, "may I never add a pang to those he has already endured !"

At this period the Huguenot cause was probably in its most flourishing condition. They had many learned and distinguished men on their side. The whole district from the Spanish frontier to Dordogne, a fertile and thickly-settled country, was peopled by the nobility devoted to the reformed cause ; and the whole of Languedoc, one, if not the most, important province in France. At Marseilles reformed churches were established. Dauphiny contributed a gallant band of veteran Huguenot gentlemen, who had served through the war. In short, the South of France was filled with Protestants, zealous in the cause, and willing to contribute all within their power. The northern provinces were much less peopled with Huguenots, but in various places partisans were residing, who stood ready at the slightest warning to give their aid. While the chiefs of the reformers and the distinguished leaders have at all times been suspected of being actuated by po-

litical purposes in their defence of the Protestant cause, no such charge can attach itself to those who could gain by vigorous exertion and warfare, merely the enjoyment of their religion. At this time so large a body of true-hearted Huguenots could be collected as to be formidable to the throne. Added to this, a counter league was formed, of which Elizabeth of England was invited to become the head. The reformed party in the Netherlands were solicited to join; also the King of Denmark, and Protestants everywhere.

The pious and conscientious Catholics never omitted any opportunity of urging the conversion of Navarre; his reply to the Bishop of Rouen was full of dignity and truth. He had urged the suggestions of others, and Henry says, "Tell them who lay these suggestions before you, that religion is not to be changed as a man changes his shirt. It is graven on the heart; and, God be thanked, so deeply graven on mine, that it is as little in my power to lay it aside as it was to adopt it, as both processes depended upon the grace of God. You whisper that accidents may happen to the King and the Duke of Anjou. I never allow my imagination to wander so far forward on matters which I can neither foresee nor control; nor will I ever speculate on my own possible aggrandizement by the death of

those to whom I owe both life and service. But if God has so ordained (which I pray he may not have done), His providence, whenever he opens the gates, will smooth the path ; for it is by him that kings reign, and in his hand are the hearts of the people. Trust me, my cousin, the whole tenor of life will instruct you to cast all your cares on the guidance of God, who punishes no sin with greater severity than any abuse of the name of religion."

However dignified was this language, it is obvious that Henry of Navarre had forgotten the early counsels of his excellent mother, and that his union with Margaret, his residence at the court of France, and his association with the dissipated young men of the time, had produced a deterioration of conduct and principle. The Huguenots saw with bitter regret, that, in his love of pleasure, his loose morality, there was little remaining of the austere virtues of the early reformers, who resembled the Puritans of England. As yet, however, he was the zealous partisan of the reformed religion, and their hopes centred in him as their leader. His wife had again returned to Paris, and it was a matter of question on which side the wrongs were greatest. Her conduct, however, had wholly alienated her brother ; the most bitter remarks passed between them, and he seems to have hated her with his whole heart.

Though her beauty and accomplishments made her an object of admiration to the gay and dissipated society around her, she found her residence so uncomfortable from the aversion of the King, which undoubtedly her own conduct had brought upon her, that she determined to quit the Court, and once more return to her husband. The King had resolved to send her away, and readily acquiesced in this measure, saying, she would be much more properly placed near the inspection of Navarre.

"Most certainly," she replied, "for from him I shall experience no rudeness."

"Not if he know as much as I know, Madam"? answered the King.

"I fear no base insinuation with Navarre," she replied, "he has the greatness of mind that ought always to belong to a King."

"We will see," said the enraged monarch, and immediately despatched information to her husband, accusing her of the most disgraceful conduct. In the mean time Margaret quitted Paris, but the King, wishing to place a few more affronts upon her, sent messengers, and ordered her to be intruded upon even after she had retired to her bed, and, contented with this insult, gave her leave to proceed. Probably when he had recovered from his violent fit of passion, he saw the disgrace which would result to his own

family by any course of punishment Navarre might pursue, and he despatched another courier, to say that he had discovered the accusations against his sister to be false, and to request Henry to take no notice of them.

Navarre was indignant at this childish conduct ; and, when he heard of the insults Margaret had received, he determined to demand an explanation. For this purpose he wrote to the King, to say, that if his wife had deserved the affront he had offered her, he should take measures to repudiate her ; if she did not, it was for the interest of himself and his house that he should deliver up the authors of the slander, as he could not consent to receive her at the Court till this was done.

Henry probably entertained no doubt about the misconduct of his wife. He does not seem to have had a very nice sense of honor in this respect, and was willing to shut his eyes on her irregularities, perhaps feeling that he had but little right to reproach her ; yet it became necessary, when the accusations were publicly made by her brother, not to tamely submit to a course of conduct that would draw upon him the contempt of the world. After some negotiations Navarre received the satisfaction from Henry that he demanded, and Margaret remained with her husband.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WAR OF THE THREE HENRIES.

THE Duke of Anjou, after his second flight from France, had made unavailing attempts in the Netherlands, and a no less unsuccessful one upon Antwerp ; but as it is the object of this history to abridge, or omit, as much as possible, accounts of events which do not immediately relate to the Huguenots, we shall not pursue him in his unfortunate career, but hasten to the period of his return to France.

The King seems to have become more affectionate towards his brother, who was his natural successor, as his hopes of leaving a lineal heir diminished. The Queen-mother received him with cordiality, and, as he arrived the 11th of February, 1584, at the beginning of the carnival, his safe return was included among the celebrations.

The King had now a companion of his revels, who was not less degraded or dissolute than himself. They rode together through the streets disguised and masked, and only betrayed by the

daring insolence of their demeanor, rushing into private houses, where parties were collected, and committing every sort of outrage and excess. At the procession of *flagellants*, instituted by the King, the two brothers appeared; wearing the garments of the order, they paraded through the streets, inflicting upon themselves voluntary stripes, and assisting in rendering the mummary still more ridiculous.

The health of Monsieur had become very infirm; his dead eye and bloated visage were sure indications of disease. At length, unable to keep up the appearance of hilarity, he returned to Chateau-Thierry, his own estate.

At this time Duplessis-Mornay, accompanied by Sully, arrived at Court on an embassy from Navarre. He had sent them to inform the King, that Philip of Spain had made overtures to him, and was willing to unite his arms with the Protestants. Sully, in vain, tried to procure an interview with the monarch. He was told, that he had retired to Vincennes, and was inaccessible to all but his *minions*, the name which distinguished his favorites. Duplessis was more successful in procuring an audience. The King expressed to him his wish to declare, publicly, Henry of Navarre his successor, but stated that it was necessary he should embrace the Catholic faith and renounce his heretical opinions. "The

situation of my poor brother," said the monarch, "renders it proper for me to appoint an heir to the throne of France, and most gladly would I name my well-beloved cousin."

The death of Monsieur took place soon after his return ; he appears to have possessed originally some virtues of character. The Queen of Navarre, mother to Henry, cherished a maternal affection for him during her residence at the Court of Charles the Ninth, and the good and virtuous Coligni counted him among his devoted young friends. Navarre, however, who, at a later period had opportunity of knowing him intimately, being a fellow-prisoner at the Louvre, declared he was "not to be trusted." His life closed with disappointment and mortification ; suspected by his brother, neglected by his mother, hated by the Huguenots for the double part he had played, and rejected by all, it would seem that he had little to make life dear. Nature is true, however, to her own laws ; when the Queen-mother heard that he was attacked with a sudden and fatal illness, she hastened to him, and, notwithstanding her own health was much affected, watched over him, and received his parting breath. He died at the age of thirty.

Though he appears to have left no friends to mourn for him, and to have been little feared by his enemies, his death occasioned a great sensation.

It became evident that the family of Valois would be extinct with Henry, and the next in line was Henry of Navarre, the Huguenot chief, and hateful to the Catholics, who considered him a relapsed heretic. The crown, on the decease of the King, would go in the Bourbon line, as descending from Robert de Clermont, the youngest son of St. Louis. The Duke of Guise, to whom this succession would have been odious, took care to inflame the minds of the populace by every possible measure against the Huguenots. The King thoroughly hated Guise and the league in all its bearings. The reformed party were scarcely less disagreeable to him, but Henry of Navarre excited in him some feeling of kindness ; while Guise had treated him with contempt, Navarre had uniformly shown him respect, and never lost sight of what was due to him as monarch of France.

Guise, as essentially head of the league, espoused the doctrine of the power and liberty of the people ; he asserted *their rights*, while Navarre asserted the absolute power of the King in all things, except religious opinions. Henry did not cease to urge Navarre to change his creed, and the Duke D'Epemon was sent to him for this purpose ; but, after many conferences, Navarre positively rejected the offer. Historians judge Henry of Navarre somewhat hardly on this occasion ;

they ascribe to him political, rather than conscientious motives. The King was only thirty-three years old, and Navarre was thirty-one. Though some physicians prognosticated his early death, others declared that he might live many years under an alienation of mind, and, in that case, the King of Navarre was much better off, as head of a warlike party, and master of a noble province, than as heir-expectant to the crown.

In 1585 the leaguers published a manifesto most insulting to the King of Navarre, calling on all good Catholics to take arms against him in support of their rights. Henry of Navarre felt the utmost indignation at this manifesto, and, waving the privilege of his rank, solicited the King to let him decide this matter with Guise in personal combat, to avoid the waste of innocent blood, or with as many retainers on either side as his Majesty chose to appoint. Guise, though brave enough to have rejoiced in such a meeting of foe to foe, saw at once that he must not accept the challenge ; on the contrary, he professed a high personal respect for Navarre, and that he had no motive for his conduct but the safety of the Catholic religion.

Guise and the leaguers now prepared for open war. The King, weak and irresolute, deputed his mother to negotiate with them. Catharine, in this conference, consented to an edict, which

amounted to an entire proscription of the Huguenots, and the King signed a treaty with the leaguers. War became inevitable, and Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Condé were again in action. This war has always been denominated “the War of the three Henries,” — Henry of Valois, of Navarre, and of Guise. The first was at the head of the party which attached itself solely to the royal authority. Henry of Guise was at the head of the zealous Catholics and the leaguers. Henry of Navarre was the chief of the Huguenot party. This was the eighth civil war which had sprung from non-conformity in religion. Navarre had applied to Elizabeth of England for aid, for which he afterward expressed his gratitude. Beza, who was yet living, though at an advanced age, undertook a pilgrimage from Geneva to the Protestant princes. The Germans were roused by the preacher’s eloquence, and sent a very large auxiliary force to aid the reformed party. Notwithstanding the bad example set by the leaders of the Huguenots, the people seem to have retained their Puritanical principles. Navarre was once openly rebuked in the church, and humbled himself to their full content. In 1583 the Synod “lamented dancings and other *dissolutions*, which do sprout and grow everywhere ;” they proscribed “painting, slashing, cutting in pieces, trimming with locks and tassels, or

unkerkchiefed bosoms, or fardingales, or the like sort of garments, in which men and women do wickedly clothe themselves," and, "in case the delinquents shall be contumacious," they proceeded to excommunicate them. The good Duplessis, wife, and daughter, were excluded from the communion table because they refused to cut off their hair.

While the King was menaced with a foreign invasion by the Huguenots, and reduced to the most degrading servitude by the leaguers, he consoled himself at Lyons by adding to his collection of dogs. Amidst the poverty and bankruptcy of his treasury he expended a hundred thousand crowns on his puerile amusements, and travelled with a numerous train of men and women, apes, parrots, and dogs. "Never shall I forget," says Sully, "my interview with the King, nor the strange attitude and dress in which I found him. He had a sword by his side, a hood on his shoulders, a little bonnet on his head, a basket full of very small dogs hanging from his neck by a ribbon, and his attitude was perfectly still, there was not the slightest motion with head, hands, or feet. He had a great desire for pictures, cutting any that he fancied out of valuable books, without any regard to their use. The most costly and ancient missals were thus destroyed, and the use he made of this collection was to paste them on the walls of his oratory."

Guise, even knowing him as well as he did, could not believe that this apathy and frivolity were not, in some degree, assumed, and he suspected that he was in secret connivance with the reformed party. It was, therefore, determined that the Duke should act according to his own discretion, without waiting for the royal authority. This arrangement was perfectly accordant with the wishes of the multitude. Guise had become an object of idolatry, and concealed his ambition under the mask of zeal for the Catholic faith. Bold, energetic, decided, and always faithful to his own cause, he seemed to have all the essential qualities of a conqueror. The Cardinal of Bourbon, uncle to Navarre, was also a prince of the blood in a more remote line. Guise flattered him with hopes of succession to the crown, and, though he was an aged man, persuaded him that he might get a dispensation from the Pope, marry, and produce a royal race for the throne of France. The old man listened to these representations, and joined the league.

To Anne de Joyeuse, one of the favorites of the King, was given the chief command of the royal army. He had married the sister of the Queen, and the King celebrated the nuptials with the greatest magnificence ; and a splendid dower was given to the bride. The Duke of Joyeuse was the only one of Henry's favorites that might

have been selected for his virtues. His temper was liberal and generous, his valor tried, and his birth illustrious. The only drawback was a love of magnificence and splendor, that perhaps was the very quality which endeared him to his royal master. Both he and Guise were each at the head of a numerous army, and both confident of the success of their enterprise. Navarre made every exertion to collect a force in some degree proportionate to theirs. The Huguenots partook his ardor, and looked forward to the combat with that impatience with which the fiery racehorse waits for the moment of starting. The Count de Soissons had persevered in his suit to Catharine de Bourbon, notwithstanding the caution of her brother ; but, as he had all the encouragement from the young lady that was necessary, his ardor did not abate. He complained to her of the coldness of Navarre, notwithstanding his professions of personal friendship, and inclination to favor the reformers. "Perhaps," said Catharine, "it is those very professions that produce the coldness ; Navarre can ill brook *words* when *deeds* are so much wanted."

"Do you think, then," said the Count, "if I were to join him in the approaching crisis, that I might be sure of a speedy consent to our union ?"

"I fear you might," she replied.

"You fear it? You are jesting."

"No, De Soissons, I truly fear it; my brother, though embracing the Huguenot cause from principle, mingles with it political measures. It is possible, that he might not be scrupulous about your motives, and would think the hand of his sister a slight reward for gaining an able partisan."

"If I were sure of it," said the Count, approaching her, "I would not delay another moment."

Catharine retreated, and, assuming an air of dignity which banished the usual vivacity of her manner, said;

"Would his consent be sufficient? Is there no one's else wanting?"

"My dear Catharine," said the Count, "what is the meaning of this sudden coldness? Can I suppose, after your acknowledgments of affection, that you would withhold your consent when his was gained?"

"You might," said Catharine, "if it were gained unworthily. You know how near to my heart is the Huguenot cause. Could I aid it by so doing, I would go forth, as my noble mother did, upon the ramparts, and breathe my spirit into the soldiers. But that time has passed; I have now, in the approaching combat, a woman's duty to perform, to administer relief to the poor

and faithful ministers of the Gospel,* and to lighten, as much as possible, the evils and sufferings which war will occasion. If you could go with me, heart and hand, in this cause, my vows would be answered ; but, when I hear you talk of joining my brother's army, to obtain his consent to our union, arming against the faith in which you were educated, without the conviction of its error, I do not recognise the man who won my heart ; and, poor as is the prize, he is unworthy of it."

" You strangely mistake me," said De Soissons ; " I know not what I said, that could thus rouse the spirit of your mother. I have had a long conference with the apostle Beza ; he is more confiding than you are, and commends my purpose of joining the Huguenot cause ; but believe me, Princess, dear as you are to me, and entwined with all my hopes of earthly happiness, had I not other motives than those you suspect, I would not depart from the faith in which I was educated."

Catharine was awed by a spirit so congenial to her own. " Forgive me," said she, extending her hand ; " I am growing suspicious ; I am surrounded by low and base designers, and am

* Catharine de Bourbon sold her jewels, and gave the money to the cause.

often obliged to listen, while my heart grows sick ; yet one hope remains to me, and I do not hesitate to say, it is founded on your truth and affection. If I were to find myself deceived in you, life would no longer be worth a contest."

"Now," said the Count, with a sudden impulse, "I may venture to confide to you my change of faith, for we feel and think alike. I am a convert to the Reformed religion ; your ministers have convinced me, that it is the true one, and, heart and hand, I can unite with Navarre."

Tears of grateful joy fell from the eyes of the young Princess, and she no longer felt it necessary to repress the tenderness with which her soul was filled.

"You will see me," continued the Count, "when we meet crowned with victory in the Huguenot cause, or hear of me, a prisoner or slain in battle. Yet, one request I would fain make, of but slight import as we feel, and yet important to my future comfort. It will nerve my arm in the battle, and restrain all undue rashness."

"Speak," said Catharine ; "what is this wondrous talisman."

"It is merely," replied he, taking a folded paper from his pocket, "to put your name to this contract, devised by the ingenuity of a lover

to soothe the anguish of parting. Cast your eye over it ; it is a mutual promise of marriage, such as we have given and taken many times ; but which I cannot receive from your lips, when far away."

Catharine, without hesitation, wrote her name, and, perhaps, felt happier for having done so ; and they parted, well contented with each other.

De Soissons at once allied himself to the Huguenot cause, and Navarre, too happy in any reinforcement, did not question the motives. His army, with all the aid he could procure, did not amount to more than half of the enemy's ; and he rejoiced to have among the chiefs De Soissons, fired with military ardor.

The post of Coutras was highly important to both parties. Navarre neglected not a moment to get possession of this place, and reached it just one hour before the Duke of Joyeuse with his army appeared in sight. Joyeuse sent a detachment to invest it ; but, after a skirmish, they retreated. During the early part of the night, on the 19th of October, 1587, Navarre succeeded in transporting half of his army across the river Doune ; but, receiving intelligence that Joyeuse was preparing to attack him, he resolved to give up the attempt of crossing the river, and ordered those who had gone over to return, determining to meet the attack at Coutras.

It will give some idea of the straitened resources of Navarre, when it is told that he had but three pieces of cannon for his field artillery. These he ordered to be placed on an eminence.

The fatigue of the Protestant army may well be imagined, when that of Joyeuse appeared in sight ; and the contrast between the appearance of the two is vividly described by various historians. "On the one side, there was gilded armour, gloriously damasked, glittering in the sun ; painted lances covered with ribbons, with their banderolles dancing in the air ; rich coats of velvet, with broad lace, and galoons of gold and silver ; large and beautiful-colored plumes waving on their crests ; scarfs magnificently embroidered and edged with long gold fringe, and all these young cavaliers carrying the ciphers and colors of their mistresses, as if they were marching to a carousal, and not on the point of giving battle."

D'Aubigne relates, that, "on the Huguenot side, they arranged themselves in a line, and, in a deep and solemn voice, sung the hundred and eighteenth Psalm ; then knelt while the minister, D'Amour, made a short but fervent prayer. It is said that this attitude was mistaken by the young cavaliers, who exclaimed ; ' 'S death ! they tremble ; the cowards are at confession.' The venerable minister drew his sword at the

conclusion of the prayer, and mingled with the combatants."

The army led by Navarre, consisted of old soldiers inured to toil and labor, whose mien was fierce and menacing ; uncombed, ill-clothed, with their long buff-coats all bespattered ; over their coarse threadbare clothes, having no other ornament than their trusty bilbo by their sides, and sound armour on their breasts, mounted on travelling horses, without housings, &c. ; in short, the two armies presented another Alexander in opposition to another Darius.

To Sully we are indebted for a graphic account of this battle. "It began," he tells us, "before the artillery was fixed ; and the shock they received was so violent, that it threw them into great disorder. The Catholics shouted victory ; but, as soon as the artillery began to play, it put a stop to their impetuosity. The King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, and the Duke de Soissons, the new ally, performed prodigies of valor. 'Come on,' said Navarre, to them ; 'we are all Bourbons, and I will show you that I am your eldest brother.' He wore a plume of white feathers on his helmet, that he might be distinguished. Once, when in imminent danger, his soldiers rushed forward to shield him. 'Stand off ! I beseech you,' said he ; 'do not eclipse me.' "

In a moment, all was changed ; the Catholic generals fell on the field of battle.

“What remains for us ?” said St. Luc to Joyeuse.

“To die !” he replied.

Both he and his brother were surrounded by Huguenots, and fell, covered with wounds.

Henry strove to stop the carnage that ensued ; he rushed from place to place, rescuing many from death. There is something truly noble in his conduct, after this first successful battle won by the Huguenots. He does not appear to have forgotten for a moment, that the sword was drawn against his own nation. He received the prisoners with a courtesy peculiar to him, and released many without ransom. To one, who asked what conditions he would now demand, he replied ; “Just the same as I would have accepted after a defeat ; — a renewal of the Edict of Poitiers.” He wrote to the King, bitterly lamenting the loss of so many Frenchmen, and such a sacrifice of life ; and, declaring that he had only taken up the sword in self-defence, expressed his obedience to his will.

After the battle, Navarre repaired to the Castle of Coutras, and if his mind indulged any disposition for reflection, it had admirable helps. That morning, he had seen the Duke of Joyeuse, the favorite of the King, at the head of a royal

army, glittering in military splendor, full of youth and ardor. In the large hall, where Navarre took his hasty repast, was now extended, on a bench, the body of the Duke, covered with a coarse cloth ! It had been drawn from under heaps of the slain.

Sully, who was present at the battle, represents Navarre as losing the fruits of this victory, by the treacherous advice of Condé, seduced by his brother-in-law, La Tremouille. The unimpeached integrity of Condé must lead every one to doubt this view of the matter. It is more probable, that the coolness, which, from this time, arose between the two cousins, was occasioned by their different measures, rather than motives. Condé withdrew his troops, and hastened to make himself master of Saintes and Brouage ; while Navarre, sick of carnage, and always bearing in mind that it was his own countrymen against whom he was contending, gladly sheathed his sword, and listened to the advice, or rather entreaty, of his new ally, De Soissons, to permit him to hasten to Bearne, where the Princess, his sister, then was, and lay his Huguenot laurels at her feet. Navarre felt bound, by gratitude for the all-important aid of the Count, to grant his request ; nor must it be omitted, that the King himself felt more than common sympathy with him on this occasion. He was earnest to pre-

sent to the young and thoughtless Countess of Guiche the colors taken from the enemy, and had them set apart for that purpose.

Accordingly they took the road to Bearne, where the happy Catharine was waiting to receive them. Her lover had redeemed his word, and her brother came crowned with victory. Even the rigid Calvinistic ministers must have looked with indulgence upon the triumphal arches and tasteful preparations which the Princess, with the then beautiful Countess of Guiche, were preparing for the victors.

Margaret had retired from Bearne, and resided in a place that she had selected, where she held her own Court; indeed, it was now generally supposed, that a formal divorce would take place between the royal pair.

During the journey of the two cousins (De Soissons was a half-brother to Condé), Navarre felt suspicions arise, of the Count's sincere devotion to the Huguenot cause. Sometimes he thought he overacted his part, and then fell short of it.

It is amusing to observe how little *religious conversion* seems to have mingled in the views of the Huguenot leaders. Except in a few instances, of which Duplessis is a noble one, it appears to have been lost sight of in political motives. Nor can more pious zeal be attrib-

uted to the Catholic chiefs, for, though Guise, after a battle, dismounted at Nôtre Dame, on his return to Paris, booted and spurred, to offer thanks at the altar, worldly ambition was the incense he laid upon it.

Before the two allies reached Bearne, a letter was mysteriously put into Henry's hand. He retired to peruse it. It stated, that he had admitted a traitor to his friendship, that De Soissons had joined him merely at the instigation of political advisers and ecclesiastics; that the Count had taken a solemn oath, that, as soon as he had married the Princess, he would take her to Paris, abandon for ever the Huguenot party, and unite with Catholics in despoiling the King of Navarre of his possessions.

A letter like this ought not to have had weight without much proof. It was mere assertion; he had risked his life in the battle, and his love for Catharine, whatever motives mingled with it, could not be doubted. It was not strange, that De Soissons, the grandson of Condé, and the nephew of Coligni, should embrace the cause for which their lives were sacrificed. Catharine's hand, too, had been sought by many. While very young, she was destined for the Duke d'Alençon; against this she positively protested. Catharine de Medicis had some idea of forming a matrimonial alliance between her and Henry

the Third, but Catharine was refractory. Other matches had been proposed, and it was natural to suppose, that the success of the Count must have excited envy and ill-will, which might give rise to the letter. Though this mode of reasoning was perfectly natural, De Soissons had a more powerful antagonist operating against him, and this was the prejudice Henry began to nurture in his own breast. He now remembered how earnestly De Soissons had urged him not to pursue the victory, but go with him to Bearne ; and, though his own wishes had swayed him equally, he felt that resentment, which is often unjust, towards advice which he now perceived was injudicious. Though a poor dissembler, he refrained from expressing disgust or suspicion, and the Princess enjoyed a short, though complete, happiness in this apparent reunion.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUDDEN DEATH OF THE SECOND CONDÉ.

THE year 1587 had now commenced. It had been looked forward to as the "grand climacteric of the world." Then, as in the present day, there were self-created seers, who predicted the day of final judgment, and the end of the world. The state in which France was placed, the constant devices of the league, the ambition of Guise, and the debility of the King, might rationally forebode some great political revolution ; but this was not enough for astrologers. There had been an earthquake, which had swelled the Loire far beyond its usual boundaries, and desolated Normandy. Meteors had blazed in the heavens, and tempests and whirlwinds had raged upon the earth. In January, 1588, a new phenomenon made its appearance. Paris, at noonday, became all at once darkened, and the fog was so impenetrable as to make torches necessary.*

* We are reminded of the "dark day" in New England, which occurred in 1780.

The year opened with dark omens ; many attempts were made to persuade the King to establish the Inquisition in the principal cities for the disposal of heretics, and to refuse quarter to any that might be taken prisoners.

Over the Huguenots a heavy calamity impended, and this was the sudden death of the Prince of Condé. His wife was suspected of poisoning him ; we enter not into this sad detail ; it may be studied out, by those who have the inclination.

This was a gloomy period for the King of Navarre ; his conduct had been severely censured by his friends and allies after the battle of Coutras, and in Condé he had lost his best and truest friend. Even the Duke of Guise shed tears when he learned the death of his brave foe. "The earth," said he, "covers not a nobler heart."

Navarre uttered no violent exclamations of grief, but he was, for a time, inconsolable ; he retired to his cabinet, exclaiming, I have lost my right hand. The slight alienations and jealousies which had arisen between them came with bitterness to his recollection. How do such petty rivalships vanish before the stern summons of death. Once or twice the King was heard to exclaim, "My friend, my brother !" As soon as he had acquired a degree of composure, he wrote

the following letter, addressed to Corisande, Countess of Grammont,* which shows his suspicions.

“ One of the greatest misfortunes that I could possibly apprehend has occurred. The sudden death of Monsieur the Prince of Condé. I lament his loss for that which he would have been, and for what he was. . . . This unfortunate Prince, on Thursday, tilted at the ring, and supped in good health. At midnight he was seized with vomiting, which continued till near morning; he remained in bed the whole of Friday; at night he was better and supped, slept well, rose on Saturday morning, dined standing upright, and after dinner played at chess. Suddenly he left his seat, and walked backwards and forwards in his chamber, conversing first with one and then another. Suddenly he exclaimed, ‘ Bring me my chair, I feel great weakness;’ he was scarcely seated, when he became speechless, and immediately after surrendered his soul.

“ The marks of poison instantly became manifest. It is impossible to conceive the astonishment this circumstance has created throughout the country. I shall set forward by break of day to make diligent investigation of the affair. I foresee, that much trouble will attend this business; pray God

* Copied from Henry’s “Memoirs.”

ardently for me ; if I should escape the like, it will be through his protection ; I may perchance be nearer it than I think. I shall remain your faithful slave. Good night, my soul ; I kiss your hands a million times.

“ March, 1588.”

Whether the horrible accusation against his wife, Charlotte de la Tremouille, princess of Condé, was true or false, she never was acquitted in the minds of his friends. After six years' imprisonment, the Parliament of Paris pronounced her innocent.

There is something fine in the character of Condé. He was remarkable for his perseverance, intrepidity, and probity. His life was an eventful one ; obliged early to fly from Noyers with his father, he beheld him perish at Jarnac. He afterwards received the last breath of his mother. He fought bravely at Moncontour, and we have seen him with difficulty escape being massacred at St. Bartholomew. More than once he traversed the whole territory of France as a fugitive, and was captured twice, his rank remaining unknown. At the battle of Coutras he was dismounted by a blow from a lance, and rose with redoubled vigor. Generous in defence of others, powerful in his own, an enemy to all deception and falsehood, pursuing a straight-forward path,

it was, at last, his melancholy fate, to perish by poison in the bosom of his family.

Guise had left Paris for Picardy when a new conspiracy arose in the kingdom. They organized a body called the Sixteen, or *les Seize*. Those, who were thus designated, were low and seditious men, though appointed as leaders. Notwithstanding they were very secret in their measures, the King gained intimation of it, and he assembled about four thousand Swiss to join his body-guard, and transported large convoys of arms from the arsenal to the Louvre. The *Seize* perceived, by these measures, that their plot was discovered, and they urged the return of Guise, requesting him to become their head. In the mean time the King sent a prohibition to him, expressly forbidding his return to Paris.

Heedless of these commands, and spurning an authority he despised, Guise entered Paris at noonday, May 9th, 1588. His presence was greeted with rapture by the people, multitudes followed his steps, and "Long live Guise, the bulwark of our religion, the pillar of our faith," was shouted by the populace.

Henry was too much intimidated to take any effectual steps. He received Guise, who entered the palace unarmed, in his usual manner. On the third morning after his arrival, Henry began to take active measures. A list was circulated,

in which the chief Romanists were marked for execution, Guise the first. The Swiss soldiers were stationed to protect the King, and the populace were led to believe, that a general massacre was intended. The shops were instantly closed, and barricades formed across the streets at the distance of fifty paces from each other. For some time no violence on either side was attempted, but at length a shot was fired, and the Swiss soldiers and populace were engaged in battle. Before evening Guise, though scarcely seen during the battle, was the undisputed master of Paris. The night was passed in alarm and watchfulness, and lights were placed in every window. Catharine de Medicis, ever on the alert, now determined to have an interview with Guise ; for this purpose she proceeded to the Hôtel de Guise. She was obliged to walk, and be lifted over the barricades. While going through this process, some friendly person whispered her, that the King would be made prisoner in a few hours. She employed the man who gave her the information to warn Henry to escape, while she kept Guise in conversation. Henry profited by this information, and hastened on foot to the Tuileries by a back passage, and, mounting a horse, rode full speed to Trapes.

The news of his flight, and the battle of the Barricades, reached Navarre while at Bearne.

His heart was filled with indignation at such an outrage offered to the King, and, calling a council, he sent his secretary to assure him, that he might immediately command his person and troops.

CHAPTER XVII.

DEATH OF TWO OF THE HENRIES, AND OF
CATHARINE DE MEDICIS.

THE day after the news reached Bearne, De Soissons entered the apartment of Catharine with an air of unusual excitement. "You have heard," said he, "what has taken place at Paris; the streets barricaded, the Swiss guards all massacred, and the King obliged to fly."

"I have," replied Catharine, "and am rejoiced to find, that Navarre has adopted the resolution of supporting him against the league."

"I knew you would approve this measure, and I now come to inform you, that my intention is the same as his."

"You go, then, with my brother?"

"Not so, I shall precede him; a King moves with less rapidity than a private gentleman, but I carry with me the same anxiety that I have so long endured. I see no more prospect of our union."

"This is hardly a time to talk of it; my brother's perplexities are great; on him devolves

the responsibility of the success or failure of our glorious cause. But, as it is only the peaceful possession of our rights, and the privilege of worshipping God according to our consciences, that we ask, I am sure *he* will, in his own good time, grant our petition, and send peace and rest to his faithful children. Whenever that period arrives, how gladly shall we exchange the cannon's roar, and the shrill voice of the trumpet, for the soft music of the harp. Then I, even I," she exclaimed, "now a Princess in bondage, will go forth like Miriam, with the song of triumph in my mouth." She drew her harp towards her, perhaps it was a woman's device to calm the agitated spirit of her lover, or perhaps her heart, like that of the Jewish prophetess,* was "wrapt into future times"; rapidly she struck the strings and poured forth the following strain.

"The earth is trembling, the mountains melt,
The rain 's descending, the clouds are rent ;
Come forth, come forth, the battle 's begun,
Come forth with thy chariot, *Mighty One!*
Onward is rushing the countless throng ;
The noise of archers, the battle-song,
The warhorse's tramp, there 's death in the gates,
The sign has been given, the angel waits,
The fleeces are dry, the dew 's on the ground,
Give ear, O ye princes ! salvation is found.
Come forth, come forth, the battle 's begun,
Why stays thy chariot, *Mighty One!*"

* Deborah.

The Count observed the kindling of her eye as she struck the strings ; her figure, so feminine, seemed to have gained new expression ; it was no earthly one ; and, little as he partook of her inspiration, he felt that it was an unseasonable time to urge his suit. At length he said, " I have placed the written contract, that is the stay of my hopes, in the hands of our mutual friend, the Countess of Guiche. Promise me, that you will not withdraw it, and that, whatever may be the plans of others, our engagement shall not be cancelled."

" I believe," said Catharine, smiling, " I might venture, but I do not much like your fancy of binding me by contracts and promises. Is it not enough for you to know, that my affection rests upon your own truth ? I, once for all, solemnly assure you, that you alone can sever the bond which binds us."

" This would be sufficient," said the Count, " if I were not too well acquainted with the snares which may be laid for you."

" Ah," replied Catharine, " I fear you are but half a convert to our faith, or you would put your trust in Him who has saved me from such wretchedness as has threatened me in past times. It was not through my own strength that I escaped, as a bird from the snares of the fowler, when under the direction of the Queen-mother.

“ I fear Navarre’s influence ten thousand times more than hers,” said the Count.

“ And why should you *fear* it ? ” replied Catharine, coldly. “ I do not understand this distrust that pervades your mind, but you are just now agitated at this news, as we all are, and the world looks dark to you ; my harp has not chased away the evil spirit that hovers over us. Shall I try it again ? ” Her fingers passed lightly over it.

“ Lady, Lady, art thou waking ?

The bright-eyed morn

Has left her bed,

And o’er thy head

The day is breaking.

From thy casement gently bending,

Listen to my vow ! ”

Suddenly the string snapped. “ Ah,” said she, pushing it from her, “ it will not just now bear so low a strain. ” *

When De Soissons took leave of her, he hastened to Sully, and informed him of his intention of offering his services to the King of France.

“ Does Navarre know this ? ” said Sully.

“ No, I wish you to inform him. I have broken the matter to my sweet little fanatic, and she receives it as I could wish. ”

* Catharine produced several poetic productions, which are handed down to posterity. — *Memoir of Henry the Great.*

“ Navarre will, perhaps, receive it otherwise,” said Sully.

“ Perhaps so,” replied the Count ; “ he likes no partner in his ambition ; but why should he not leave the same right to me that he asserts for himself ? ”

“ But you have already pledged your services to *him* ; he has a right to command them.”

“ The King of France did not require them at the time I offered them to the King of Navarre,” replied the Count ; “ but I wish you to accompany me ; will you agree to it ? ”

“ I will think of it.”

Sully repaired to the King, and informed him, as he felt bound, of De Soissons’ proposal. “ Navarre,” he says, “ was sensible of the indignity offered him in this procedure, but upon the whole, concluded that it was best to dissemble his resentment,” and even urged Sully to go with him. It was all-important to the King to truly understand De Soissons’ character before he committed his sister’s happiness to his keeping. Nor was this all ; the letters he had received, and his own observation, had led him to believe that the Count was playing a double game, and he was well pleased to have Sully, in whom he could confide, near him.

Sully, in this, as well as in other instances, does not seem to have thought it disgraceful to

feign friendship, while he was acting the part of a spy to serve Navarre.

We are often led to reflect upon the code of morals, which seems to have been adopted in those times. Whether society has, in reality, grown better, or only comprehends better what is high and honorable, we have gained something. In accordance with the plan arranged between Navarre and his devoted friends, Sully returned to the Count, and, according to his own declaration, affected a zeal for De Soissons, that he did not feel. They now travelled together, and, during the journey, Sully was much dissatisfied with the conversation and manners of the Count. It is seldom that a spy disappoints his employer. He accused his fellow-traveller of insufferable vanity, a trait in which any one, who reads the entertaining memoirs of Sully, will not think the Count enjoyed exclusively. There are weaknesses that, when mutual, wholly unfit companions for harmony ; vanity, and likewise selfishness, can bear no fellowship, for they are monopolizing. One charge, however, unless his prejudices deceived him, is of a more serious nature. He declares, that De Soissons insensibly mingled a vein of gall and bitterness against the King of Navarre, that discovered the hatred and antipathy he bore to him. This, while he was seeking a union with his sister, and professing friendship to

him, is not to be excused. De Soissons was sanguine, that, in the desperate situation of the King of France, the first comer with a goodly number of aids and retainers, would be received with magnificence and honor. On arriving, however, he found himself wholly mistaken. The King depended on Navarre, and, probably remembering the desertion of the Count, received him ungraciously. Henry was under great terror and depression, and finally became apparently reconciled to Guise, who was undoubtedly his most bitter enemy. That this reconciliation was the effect of terror, and owing to the influence of the Queen-mother, is the only excuse to be suggested for the King. They formed a treaty, called the "Edict of Reunion," and Guise was sanctioned by legal authority in the measures he had taken. This edict required an oath from the King, that, if he should die without male issue, no successor should be admitted, that did not profess the Catholic faith. Two armies were levied against the Huguenots. Guise was appointed Lieutenant-general, and the old Cardinal de Bourbon was declared first prince of the blood. Guise was received by the King, and entertained at his table. We feel both contempt and pity for the abject monarch.

Persecution was again revived in the city of Paris. Huguenots were again brought to the stake, and the league flourished.

Although the King saw himself reduced to despair, he dissembled his feelings, and even affected to smile at his recent disgrace. Probably dark thoughts were brooding in his mind, and there were some that understood the stealthiness of his purpose. On the morning of the 23d of December Guise received a message from the King, requesting his personal attendance, as he wished to consult with him on matters of importance. The Duke had received repeated warnings of intended treachery, but his heart was fearless ; he disregarded them, and said, " They dare not attempt my life." He entered the ante-room to the King's apartment, and took some slight refreshment while he was announced. The usher returned and said, the King was ready to admit him. With a firm, confident step he moved forward ; a small corridor was to be passed through before he reached the King's chamber ; he raised the hangings to enter it ; at that moment a poniard entered his throat. The blood gushed from the wound ; he tried to speak, and laid his hand on the hilt of his sword ; base assassins gathered round, and he fell dead, covered with numerous wounds.

The King seems to have felt a childish exultation when he beheld the dead body of his enemy, now stiff and powerless. He hastened to the apartment of his mother, who was confined by

illness, and informed her of the deed, and that he alone had planned it. Catharine simply asked him, if he had weighed the consequences, and taken all necessary precautions. He replied, that he had ; “ Then I pray God to prosper you,” said she. The mother and son thus parted ; he went to his *mass*, and she was left to reflect, that the most important step of Henry’s life had been taken without her knowledge or concurrence. The King seems to have discovered some gleams of his early character after this event ; he ordered the arrest of many of the leaguers, and acted with an energy that was once expected from the Duke of Anjou.

Catharine de Medicis, who has borne so conspicuous a part through our history ;— she, who had at one time shared the confidence of Condé and Coligni ; who had favored the Huguenot party, and betrayed it, and counselled the massacre of St. Bartholomew ;— she, who was an obscure and neglected wife during the life of her husband, and had followed, without resistance, the car of her rival, Diane de Poitiers ;— *she*, the proud daughter of Lorenzo de Medicis, who could make human passions subservient to *policy*, was now stretched on the bed of suffering. Time had robbed her of her personal charms, and that scourge of the human race, the gout, was racking her bones and sinews. Surrounded by mercenary

attendants, she saw her sun of glory extinguished before it went down. How many reflections must have thronged upon her mind! like the ghost of Banquo, how many murdered friends must have risen one by one before her. The daughter-in-law of Francis the First, the wife of Henry the Second, the mother of Francis the Second, of Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, all Kings of France, and in whose dynasty she had borne a part, was now to be stripped of her honors, to surrender her noble palaces, which she had built with true Italian taste and magnificence, and occupy as narrow a space as the lowliest child of want, who petitions for his daily fare of bread. "No one," says an historian, "concerned himself either with her illness or her death, and, when her eyes were closed, she was spoken of no more."

But is this true? Has not her memory come down to *us*? Do good or evil deeds thus pass from the face of the earth? Who hears the name of Catharine de Medicis, that does not connect with it emotions such as few other women have excited? With strong powers of mind, with great personal beauty, she seems to have wanted *a heart*. Her principles were never guided by her affections, her errors were never those of weakness, her vices never proceeded from self-gratification, nor her virtues from

benevolence. She had been building a splendid mausoleum for herself, her husband, and her children ; but the town of Blois could not furnish spices and drugs for her embalming ; no one was interested in securing her a last home in the mausoleum she had erected, and she was carried by torch-light to a hastily made grave, in the corner of the church. She was seventy when her death took place.

Such a character as Catharine de Medicis is not likely to be passed over ; it is almost unique in the history of woman. After the death of Francis the First, and Henry the Second, her husband, she reigned supreme by the power she obtained over her sons. It has been said, that those only can govern others, who can govern themselves. Catharine had practised the art of self-control most fully, and admirably acquired the most difficult part of the lesson of governing. She seems herself divested of human passions, but using and operating upon those of others for her own purposes. Even her sons became mere instruments in her hands, and were played off one against the other, made friends or enemies as suited her political schemes. Margaret of Valois, with as little principle as her mother, had more heart, more impulse, and sank deep in vice, that Catharine was never impelled to practise. She has been accused of inordinate ambition ; there

seems to be no striking proof of this, unless we call the love of *sway*, ambition. To *manage* became her ruling passion, and every thing was sacrificed to it. She has been termed a monster of cruelty ; but she was merely indifferent about human life, she took no pleasure in torturing her victims ; if she could only obtain her end by sailing on a sea of blood, as a matter of course, it must be shed. Her love for the fine arts never seems to have softened or moulded her mind ; she had few of the weaknesses of humanity, and still fewer of its virtues. The odium of the St. Bartholomew massacre has been wholly attributed to her. It is not material, whether she planned it, or merely prepared her son for the deed. It was one that she considered expedient, and that was sufficient. The only feeling she seems to have discovered, was when Coligni fell into her toils ; she shed tears, and probably regretted that it was *expedient* to take his life. — The Cardinal of Guise, brother to the Duke, was arrested immediately after the assassination, and met with the same fate. Henry, dreading the effect of a public funeral, ordered the bodies to be consumed.

It may well be supposed, that the death of the Duke was a matter of thanksgiving to the Huguenots. He had, like his father, been their constant and untiring foe. Beza rejoiced, that

to this great event the reformed party had not been accessary. La Nouë thanks God, that the deed has been done, and yet the hands of the Huguenots have not been polluted "with blood, their hearts with vengeance, nor their consciences with perfidy." Henry of Navarre did not thus receive the news of the murder. He remembered when Guise had been his school-fellow and playmate, and, when grown to manhood, had shared the same rivalships, and contended for the smiles of the same court beauties; and, though they had since often met in battle, he mourned the premature death of his early friend and companion.

The Huguenot arms had been successful, but at length a truce was agreed to between the two Kings. It was proposed, that they should meet and arrange the treaty, that they might unite their arms against Mayenne, who, after the death of Guise, proclaimed himself head of the League.

The noble manner in which Henry of Navarre confided in the King of France, and placed himself in his power, has been as much commended as the Duke of Guise's confidence has been blamed. It is, undoubtedly, events like this, which often make success or failure the test of wisdom or folly.

Henry the Third's character inspired no confidence. The Huguenots were silenced by the

heroism of their King ; but, as he drew near the place of rendezvous, they urged him to give up the hazardous conference with a man, to whom assassination was merely an expediency.

When they arrived at a particular place, Navarre checked his speed. It might be, that the beauty of the spot, though late in the autumn, brought deeper thoughts to his heart. It was near a mill embowered in trees, and watered by one of those mountain streams, that restore verdure and beauty wherever they wind their course. He dismounted, and, seeking a solitary nook, threw himself on the velvet carpet spread by nature. Let us hope that the heart of the Huguenot chief rose to *Him*, who had created such living beauty from inanimate objects. At length he joined his waiting and anxious followers, his decision was made. "On, on, my friends," he exclaimed, "we must hesitate no longer."

When the two Kings met, the throng was so great that they could not embrace for several minutes. Navarre had crossed the Loire for this meeting, and had given his word to his followers, that he would not trust himself with his late enemy during the night ; he, therefore, recrossed the river, but the next morning returned, attended by a single page, and presented himself at the quarters of Henry, to assist at his levee.

The confidence was not abused. The King

of France, for once, trusted his true friend. Navarre thus wrote to Duplessis.

“The ice is at last broken, not without many warnings, that, if I hazarded the conference, I was a dead man. I crossed the river after having commended myself to God, who in his goodness hath not only preserved me, but has occasioned an appearance of extreme joy on the part of the King, and of unparalleled enthusiasm on the part of the people. There were shouts of *Vivent les Rois*, which gladdened my heart, and a thousand petty incidents well deserving note. Send on my baggage, and order the whole army to advance.”

It is gratifying to note any expressions in Navarre's conversation or letters, which are in unison with the cause for which he professed to bear arms, or the religion in which he had been educated. We confess, that in this tumultuous and varied history we are tempted sometimes to lose sight of it, and forget that the war of the Huguenots was a *religious war*; that it was for the exercise of their own opinions they were contending, their own altars they were defending. The time, however, was rapidly approaching, when new motives were to be openly acknowledged.

The consternation which the death of the Guises created would have been a favorable moment to have resumed the authority of a monarch. But Henry seems to have been as much astonished as his subjects ; and, satisfied with this bold step, he returned to his usual habits. The Duke of Mayenne, brother to the Guises, determined to revenge their death, and easily stirred up the Parisians to open rebellion. Sixtus the Fifth refused to grant the King absolution for the assassination of the Guises, and menaced him with excommunication. Nothing could have been more deplorable than his situation. The League embraced almost the whole of his empire ; he had neither money nor resources, and on the aid of Navarre he must have essentially depended. He seems to have been roused from his habitual indolence after this interview, and actually raised a body of cavalry. The Duke of Epernon brought a supply of twelve hundred troops, and Henry of Navarre, at the head of the Huguenot army, began his march to Tours. In the mean time Mayenne, who had succeeded his brother Guise, made a sudden and wholly unexpected attack on the quarters of the King. Adversity seems to have roused some of the qualities that marked the former Duke of Anjou. He betrayed no agitation, but calmly issued his orders. The

arrival of Navarre relieved him from his danger, and Mayenne retreated. The Royalists and Huguenots, uniting their arms, gained great advantages, and the Leaguers at Paris began to tremble. Navarre, with the resolution and bravery which always marked his character, urged an immediate attack upon the Capitol. It was well known that the King had determined to take ample vengeance upon the Parisians for their rebellious conduct, if they again fell into his hands. The situation of the Leaguers seemed hopeless. Fortune, as if weary with persecuting Henry, was now loading him with success, and he was on the point of gaining a victory, that would have seated him on the throne more firmly than ever.

On the 31st of July a young monk, who appeared to be about twenty-three years of age, arrived at the royal camp. He informed them that he had a message of the most confidential nature to deliver to the King. The King had retired, and it was too late for an audience. On the ensuing morning, at an early hour, while the King was still undressed, he ordered the Monk to be brought to his apartment. The young ecclesiastic entered with the meek and devout attitude of his order, his hands crossed upon his breast, and his eyes cast down. Henry, always disposed to favor the monastic order, received him with kindness. The monk approached, and

presented a letter ; while the King was reading it, he took a knife from his sleeve, and plunged it into the vitals of the King. Henry drew out the knife and struck the assassin with it in the face. The monk was put to death by those around the King, and but little more known of him, than that his name was Clement, and that he was a gloomy fanatic, who believed himself commanded to execute this deed. It is conjectured, that he was worked up to this degree of madness by the Duchess de Montpensier, and perhaps Mayenne. When it was ascertained that the wound was fatal, Henry received the information with calmness, sent for Navarre, and ordered the nobility to be admitted. He embraced Navarre again and again, entreated him to become a convert to the Catholic religion, and declared him his successor. At the time of his death he had not completed his thirty-eighth year, and had reigned fifteen.

We cannot dismiss Henry the Third, the last of the race of Valois, without a summary of his character. It is seldom that such an entire change is seen in one being, as took place in Henry from the time of the last battle he won as Duke of Anjou, to the end of his disgraceful career. It is said, that his Polish subjects were attached to him. They probably had not time to discover that the brilliant fame he brought with him, was all of glory that remained. His disgraceful flight

from Poland, on the news of his brother's death, must have reconciled them to his loss. His conduct, as King of France, requires no comment. Weak and prodigal, indolent and hypocritical, governed by favorites, whom he never hesitated to betray, occasionally siding with all parties, and despised by all, because faithful to none, we look in vain for redeeming points. The assassination of Guise is the only vigorous step that he took, and the only one that a wise King (setting aside the atrocity of the murder) could have devised. It became necessary that Guise should fall; in no other way could the peace of the kingdom be established, or the throne rendered secure. It was the only alternative left for him. It may be doubted whether he saw the event in all its political bearings, as he seems to have relapsed into his usual supineness after the deed was accomplished, and to have taken but little advantage of it. Probably his great object was to get rid of an enemy who had become intolerable to him. Notwithstanding his feeble and uncertain conduct afterward, great effect was produced. The League, which had been so formidable, was robbed of its vital principle in Guise, who might have been called its soul. Henry's union with Navarre, prompted by fear and, we are willing to think, some degree of affection, had placed him in a favorable position. The nobles began to

return to their legitimate King, a powerful army had flocked to his standard, and, but for his death, Paris was on the point of being subjugated. It might be supposed, that Henry of Navarre, whom he declared his successor, and who was in the vigor of manhood, illustrious in war, beloved by his private friends, surrounded by devoted adherents, and eminently gifted in all that wins confidence and admiration, would have been hailed by the royal army as King of France. But there were many obstacles in the way. The heads and generals of the army were his equals, many of them his companions in arms. While Henry the Third wore the crown of France he was their King, much as they despised him. Henry of Navarre was to be made King of France from the Bourbon line, and, though his succession was a law of the kingdom, they were not prepared to recognise him. A general sentiment against him seemed to prevail, and they declared they would not submit to a heretic King. After much deliberation, an embassy waited on Navarre, to inform him, that the time had come when he must decide between being only King of Navarre or King of France; that he must embrace the Catholic faith, if he hoped for the succession, or must continue to endure the miseries and sufferings he had endured as King of Navarre, for there was not a noble that would not rather throw

himself upon his sword than be instrumental to the ruin of the Catholic church.

The reply of Henry is full of dignity and feeling ; he touchingly reminds them of the recent death of their King, whose ashes are not yet cold ; and of his earnest wishes in his favor. He described their situation when he joined his forces to theirs, and finally declared, that all those who pleased were welcome to quit him, and that he should still find among the Catholics those who loved France and honor.

The Swiss at once declared for the *Bearnois*, as they called Navarre, and demanded a sight of him. Henry dressed himself in a violet suit, belonging to Henry the Third, who was in mourning for his mother, (it is said, his poverty prevented his having a new suit,) and in this gave them audience. The Marshal de Byron declared himself in his favor ; and at length the royal army, with some exceptions, agreed to swear allegiance, if he would submit to receive instructions from the Catholic priests within six months.

There is little doubt, that Henry saw the peace of France could only be secured by this promise. Nor will those, who understand his political situation, much doubt what would have been the result. The King was thirty-six ; for thirteen years he had been fighting for the reformed faith.

It is hardly to be supposed that he expected any new lights to be thrown on the subject ; he had been forced once to profess it, and then he abjured it. The Protestants believed that it was only an evasion ; whereas the Catholics considered it as a virtual obligation to enter their ranks.

The state of Henry the Fourth's affairs was so desperate after the death of Henry the Third, that many of his friends and faithful servants advised him to fly and seek refuge in England with Elizabeth, who had professed a warm friendship for him. "No," replied he, "though I am a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a warrior without money, while I continue at the head of so many French warriors, advising me to fly is offering counsel which it is impossible for me to follow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

NAVARRE PLEDGES HIMSELF TO HOLD A
CONFERENCE WITH THE CATHOLICS.

WE quit, for a moment, the present hero of our narrative, Henry of Navarre, to return to his sister, Catharine of Bourbon. She had looked with intense interest upon the events that were passing, and which she saw would so deeply affect all her future life. We can hardly imagine a more powerful concentration of interests. Her brother, her guardian and protector since his escape from the Louvre, the Chief of a cause, which she fully believed involved not only her religion, but the salvation of her soul, was now called to renounce this precious faith by every argument that could speak to his worldly ambition, or his political patriotism. Her lover, likewise, to whom she was attached with a fervor and constancy, that made affection a part of her existence, — how would all these changes affect him? She knew of Navarre's displeasure at his haste in offering his services to Henry the Third, without even consulting *him*, to whom he had a short time

before pledged his allegiance. Catharine thought it wrong, but love has its own theory of morals. And she attributed this assumption of independence to loyalty for the King of France, to patriotism, and, above all, to the generous indignation, which filled her own and Navarre's heart, for the insults offered to the unfortunate King. Once destined to be his bride, she had seen the best part of his character, which at the time was happily contrasted with the dissolute boldness of the Duke of Alençon. To a young and gay girl there might have been a charm in royalty, but Catharine was born to live in the strength of her affections. Henry was too far from the *beau idéal* she had formed of him who was to be all in all to her, to wish to be Queen of France, if she must share the throne with such a partner ; and she wholly declined the union, even before the Queen-mother had changed her purpose, and determined to marry the pure, the innocent, the virtuous princess to her youngest son, the dissipated Alençon. On this subject Catharine listened to no negotiation. She had but one answer, "*Never* ;" and, while she felt pity and compassion, such as angels feel for a sinning race, she would not suffer the subject to be mentioned to her. It was at this crisis, that De Soissons accidentally met her in one of the apartments of the Louvre. Navarre had coun-

selling her to retirement, and he never saw her with Catharine's train of beautiful and accomplished ladies, without manifest displeasure. He was accustomed to say, with his lax morality, "They are good enough for *me*, but not for *you*." De Soissons became the companion of her walks; and, in his gentleness, his delicacy, and the refinement of his manners, she found her *beau idéal*. Years had passed on, and her heart was sick with delay; yet her affection was in its first and earliest strength, and was now supported by her maturer judgment. She could not conceal from herself that Navarre was wholly averse to the union, and had permitted, and, perhaps, secretly encouraged offers that had been made to her, and negotiations from crowned heads. James of Scotland, the Duke of Lorraine, the Prince of Condé, and the Prince of Anhalt, had made their pretensions. Philip of Spain proposed an alliance, which Catharine had not the trouble of rejecting, as Navarre peremptorily declined all negotiation. The Duke of Savoy had solicited a union, but to this the Huguenots were decidedly averse. It was the general opinion of Catharine's friends, that, if she did not marry De Soissons (and this was understood to depend on the consent of her brother), she would never marry. The spring of life had passed away with the lovers, but their constancy remained unim-

paired, and it was evident that Catharine attributed to unreasonable expectations and unfounded prejudices the constant delay of Navarre. Then it might be truly said, she had never cherished "the little purple flower, which maidens call love in idleness." She was surrounded by numerous and powerful claims, and all of her thoughts, that she did not give to her lover, were given to her people and their ministers. The venerable Beza, who had been the friend and solace of her mother, received a degree of filial affection from the daughter. La Nouë, Duplessis, D'Aubigné, and all the distinguished Huguenots of the time, were her constant associates and correspondents; and hopes and expectations were absorbed in high thoughts and useful purposes. In the mean time the breach was widening between Navarre and the Count, who he believed was secretly operating against him, and favored all views but his.

Madame de Montpensier, the sister of Guise, shared the restless spirit of her brother during his life, and breathed vengeance after his death. She heard the news of the King's assassination with undisguised joy, and employed priests to canonize Jaques Clement as a saint and a martyr. She distributed green scarfs among the chiefs of her faction, and called it mourning, in ridicule of that worn by the Royalists. Philip of Spain

promised Mayenne aid, if he would remain firm to the cause of the Cardinal de Bourbon. After a few days, though still imprisoned, the Cardinal was proclaimed King of France, under the title of Charles the Tenth.

Mayenne, it will be recollected, was the brother of Guise. He was naturally tardy in his movements, and suffering from constant indisposition ; but on this occasion he, and his sister, Madame de Montpensier, made such vigorous exertions, that all voices in the capital were united against the heretic King. The son of the Duke of Guise had been imprisoned after his father's assassination, and was kept in close confinement. Those who were round him saw the outbreakings of a spirit, which they predicted would, one day, revenge the murder of his father.

It is not our intention to enter into the numerous battles of Henry. They are fully detailed by Sismondi, the latest historian of France, and Davila, the early one, while Sully gives his own personal observations. The outline of Navarre's history, with the immediate events relating to the reformed party, is all that comes within our plan.

Sixtus the Fifth had excommunicated Henry the Third, and was equally indignant at Navarre. Yet he seems to have expressed great doubts of Mayenne's success, and even foretold his failure.

“How can it be otherwise,” said he, “when the Chief of the League spends more hours at his table than the *Bearnois* allows himself in bed.”

Henry, by his bravery at Arques, completely routed his opponents, and opened to himself a path to the gates of Paris. But here a formidable army presented itself. The Leaguers could bring ten to one in battle against Henry's forces. One of the prisoners taken at Arques, observed to the King, that he had but a handful of soldiers in his camp. Henry replied with his usual spirit, “You have not yet seen all my forces ; you do not reckon, in your account, God and the good cause, which are on my side.”

After repeated victories he found himself obliged to withdraw to Tours, leaving Mayenne in possession of the capital. This, however, was a short-lived triumph to the head of the League. A new faction had arisen, under the name of *the Seize*, and Mayenne found he had to contend against enemies within as well as without the city.

A battle took place ; and the army of the League was headed by Mayenne. The disproportion on the side of Navarre was that of ten thousand to nineteen thousand. While the King buckled on his helmet, he said to those around him, “If you lose sight of your standard, bear these white plumes in view ; they will ever be

found in the path of honor and duty." The battle was won by the *white plumes*, and the white standard of the Guises, embroidered with black fleurs-de-lis, was no longer a guide to the Leaguers.

Sully tells us, that, wherever the battle raged, there towered the white plumes; and frequently Henry hazarded his life in a manner that filled his adherents with despair. Once, when the peril he incurred was represented to him, he replied, "I cannot do otherwise; it is for my glory and crown that I fight; my life and every thing else ought to be of no consideration to me."

It is remarked of Henry, that, with all his courage and fearlessness, there was no foolish rashness; he always did what was wisest and bravest, even though it might not chance to be the safest course. The various successful battles which Henry won, enabled him to lay siege to Paris. When the siege commenced, the city was well fortified, though poorly garrisoned. It contained about two hundred and thirty thousand souls. The only method of conquering the city, and reducing it to submission, was by famine. Henry, who considered Paris as *his* capital, was loth to endanger it by an assault, that might lay it in dust. The death of Cardinal Bourbon, whom the Leaguers had proclaimed King, to the exclusion of Navarre, made no change in their meas-

ures. The siege was continued till famine appeared in its most distressing forms. There are few that, from description, can form any idea of the horror of starvation. It is best understood by the expedients to which they had recourse, of robbing the charnel-houses of their contents. Henry, who regarded them as his own rebellious subjects, at length yielded to the pity and compassion which were evidently traits of his character, and suffered his soldiers to barter food for their useless gold. He even received within his lines the old and imbecile, who had been suffered to leave the city. There has been much discussion on this subject. This leniency has found severe military censors, and it has been said, that necessity obliged the King to raise pay for his troops by selling provisions. But may we not believe that compassion alone was his motive? Thirteen thousand had died a death of lingering agony, and still the leaders, perhaps the only ones that were not suffering famine, refused to capitulate. Let us believe, for the honor of human nature, and for the consistency of Henry's character, which contemporary historians describe as compassionate and feeling, that mercy was at least with him a kingly attribute, and that he listened to its pleadings.

The aid Mayenne received from the Duke of Parma at this time, obliged Henry to withdraw

to Senlis, and give up the siege of Paris. He dismissed the greater part of his army, probably for want of money to retain them, and kept only such as he considered absolutely necessary. Since the death of Henry the Third, Navarre was no longer fighting for the reformed religion; he was now contending for the crown in right of succession, for the kingdom of France; and, though still preserving his Huguenot subjects and allies, a large number of the Catholic nobles, as well as soldiers, had enlisted on his side. Out of Paris the League was generally held in detestation, in the city new factions were constantly arising, and all seemed tending towards its dissolution. Another event took place, which weakened the influence of Mayenne. The young Duke of Guise, who had been confined in the castle of Tours since the murder of his father, made his escape, and the new party of the *Seize* at once espoused his cause. The King of Spain too was greatly disposed to aid him, and there was a probability, that he would select him as a husband for the Infanta. All these circumstances operating induced Mayenne to open a negotiation with Henry, but, as the first preliminary to his ascending the throne of France was *immediate* conversion to the Catholic religion, the King would not listen to it, though he uniformly declared, that he was willing to receive instruction.

The Catholic nobles, who were in favor of Henry's succession to the throne, began now to exhibit much impatience at his delay on the subject of *instruction*, or it might be truly termed *conversion*, for all foresaw this would be the final result. For half a century war had sheltered itself under the name of religion, and in the earlier stages it better deserved that name. But the enmity and rivalry, which had arisen between the Bourbons and Lorraines had gradually changed the whole aspect of the civil wars, and religion seemed little more than a watchword. Henry of Navarre, as the head of the reformed church, was viewed with enthusiasm by his countrymen and subjects. Regarding him as more than a mere earthly hero, they viewed his head encircled, not by a crown of fading laurels, but by a wreath of immortal stars. To have abandoned this cause, but upon *conviction*, would have satisfied neither party. It became, however, sufficiently evident, that the sword of civil war would never be sheathed under a heretic king, and there is little doubt but the reformed party, as well as the Catholics, began to contemplate this measure as certain. As to Henry's own view of the matter, there seems to be no word on record, which would lead us to assert, that he regarded the matter lightly; even with his confidant and counsellor, Sully, he never talked of it as *merely* a political

measure. There is little reason to believe that religion was the great principle of Henry's life ; his deviations from morality are wholly opposed to Christian precepts ; but he had been educated in the Protestant faith, and had fought for it, and probably all his serious convictions were on that side. But these "were few and far between." His life had been a busy one, divided between perils and amusements, and the facility with which he abjured his faith, after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, is contrasted by the firmness of his cousin, the young Condé. Upon the whole, we willingly admit, that Henry could not pretend to *Christian* excellence. It is affecting, at this period, to compare the brother and sister. The Princess had been surrounded by parasites, and in the pernicious intercourse, which she was in a manner compelled to keep with Margaret of Valois, and the Countess of Guiche, the *chère amie* of Henry, a mind less pure might have contracted spots and stains, but not so with Catharine. With a firm and lofty purpose she trod the crooked path before her, her eye fixed on the bright vista to which it led, far, far, beyond. There she beheld the saints of old, prophets, apostles, and martyrs ; and there too, her mother, the noble Jane d'Albret, released from mortal struggle, and holding in her hand the palm of victory. But poor Catharine was not

thus released, and while her eye was fixed on heaven, her heart wandered to earth. De Soissons was still her first and only choice, and she rejected, with indignation, every rumor that interfered with the *beau idéal* she had formed. Catharine was naturally enthusiastic, and she loved through the medium of her imagination. Of all modes of loving, this is the most incurable ; it resists arguments, even facts, like the retina of the eye, which retains the dazzling brightness of the setting sun, after the glorious orb has sunk behind the hills. Navarre had expressed his doubts of De Soissons' fidelity to himself. Catharine calmly answered, that *she* had *none*. Margaret whispered her fears of his constancy ; Catharine was silent, but in her expressive glance might be read, " Those *fear* who *betray*." Both Catholics and Protestants talked of his ambitious projects, and Catharine's lip slightly curled, as she thought how little they could gauge his mind and heart.

In those days of free and licentious intercourse, the calm dignity of De Soissons' manner had a peculiar charm for the Princess. Sully, who certainly did not love him, says, that nature had made him directly opposite to the King ; that he resembled him neither in humor nor in frankness ; that he endeavoured to impose upon the world " an assumed seriousness for an air of grandeur ;

labored to appear impenetrable, and mistook the frozen countenance, which false gravity wears, for dignity." We may make much allowance for this description, and even believe, that, in an age where vice scarce condescended to wear the mask of hypocrisy, the Princess must have found a charm in the very manner that Sully condemns.

The step which had incensed Navarre most fully against the Count, was the secret journey that he took to Bearne, in order to persuade the Princess to marry him without the knowledge of her brother. Though Catharine rejected the proposal, she could not view it in a criminal light, for she very naturally believed, that love, and not ambition, had prompted him to this measure.

The first decided step, which Henry took against De Soissons, was to remove him from the government of Poitou, in consequence of intelligence that he received of the Count's being engaged in a plot to exclude him from the throne, in the hope of being himself elected king, as prince of the blood. This intelligence, whether true or false, confirmed Henry in his determination not to give his consent to his sister's marriage; but he had yet hopes of convincing her of the Count's unworthiness, and persuading her voluntarily to relinquish him. Happily for Catharine she participated little in political intrigues,

and was easily reconciled, by such slight reasons as Henry chose to allege, for the removal of her lover from Poitou.

As the great crisis of Navarre's life drew near, it absorbed for a time with Catharine all other thoughts. Her clear and discriminating mind perceived, that the decision was approaching. Perhaps it will not be difficult to share and understand her feelings. The Protestant faith had been deeply woven into her heart and life ; from her high rank she had been resorted to by the distinguished heads of the party, and had shared, with Navarre, the title of protector to the helpless and poor. She had felt something of royal pride at her station, and yet more at that of her brother. She had seen him young, beautiful, and brave, enduring all hardships and dangers, to win the crown of immortal life ; all this was for religion, the *true religion*, as she believed, and now was he to lose his heavenly crown for an earthly one ? She saw the temptations and difficulties which surrounded him, and probably had an instinctive feeling, that the *conference*, which he had pledged himself to hold, would end in his adoption of the Catholic faith.

CHAPTER XIX.

RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE.—PLOT AGAINST
THE PRINCESS OF BOURBON.

PHILIP of Spain wished to place the Duke of Guise on the throne, and promised him the Infanta ; but the League had become so much weakened in numbers, that they declared it necessary to postpone any new attempt. Henry now found that the discontent of the Catholics was breaking through all bounds ; every attempt was made by his enemies to excite the populace against him, and even the nobles declared that they could no longer support the delay. Thus urged, the King announced, that, on the 15th of July (1593), he would attend a conference at Nantes, for the purpose of instruction.

The feelings of the Huguenots may be imagined, as they saw the crisis approach. Duplessis wrote an affecting letter to him at this time.

“ I am not ignorant,” says he, “ of the troubles to which your Majesty finds yourself exposed, for I have always foreseen them. The first thing

requisite is to pour out the soul in contrition before God. The next thing, after having done our utmost, is to trust ourselves with confidence to his hands, well assured that no human conspiracy can avail against his blessing." He adds, that "he will find a number of faithful friends to abide by him through every storm, and at every disadvantage."

Whatever were Duplessis's fears, he does not appear to have relinquished his hopes, that the King might still adhere to the reformed faith. At length the morning arrived, and Henry wrote to the fair Gabrielle d'Estrées, informing her, that "on the Sunday following he should take the first leap."

This declaration proves that he had already determined on his own conversion. From six o'clock to eleven he listened with profound attention to expositions on various points from the learned doctors and bishops. He declared, that his greatest doubts arose from three essential articles of the Romish faith; auricular confession; the invocation of saints; and the spiritual authority of the Holy See. On these subjects he gradually professed himself freed from all doubt by the profound arguments which were advanced. They then began to speak of transubstantiation. But, probably fatigued with the debate, he cut them short, by saying, that, on this subject, he

never entertained any doubt, but believed as they did.

The joy was general among the nobles, when Henry announced the day on which he would seek reconciliation with the Church. Every preparation was made for the august ceremony ; it was to take place at the Cathedral of St. Dennis, as the Church of Notre Dame was closed by order of Mayenne. The church or abbey of St. Dennis was a religious structure, venerable for its antiquity and sanctity, and peculiarly sacred as being the repository of the royal race of Kings of the Capetian line.

“ On the day appointed Henry presented himself, dressed in white, before the portal of the edifice, attended by the Princes of the blood, nobility, and gentry ; he was followed by the guards, superbly accoutred. The Archbishop of Bourges, surrounded by prelates, met him at the entrance. Holding in his hands a book of the Gospels open, he demanded of Henry who he was, and the nature of his errand. ‘ I am the King,’ he replied, ‘ who desire to be received into the bosom of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Romish Church.’ Throwing himself on his knees he then ‘ protested to live and die in its defence, renouncing all heresies contrary to its doctrine.’ ” *

* Wraxall's History of France.

Some difficulties had arisen about the confession of faith, which the King was expected to subscribe, but he now presented it signed with his name to the Archbishop. Shouts of congratulation rose from the multitude, as he again kneeled, repeated his oath, received the sign of the cross, and kissed the altar. A solemn *Te Deum* was chanted in the choir. The Bishop of Nantes performed mass, while Henry sat enthroned under a canopy glittering with fleurs-de-lis of gold and jewels. Money was scattered to the people among the cries of *Vive le Roi*, and the King dined in public. In the evening fireworks were exhibited, and splendid festivities took place. A truce for three months was concluded with the chiefs of the League. The news of Henry's apostasy, for such they termed it, filled the reformed party with grief and mortification. Duplessis, well knowing that Catharine would need support and consolation under this heavy affliction, hastened to her, and even ventured to insinuate, that the King might again return to the true faith. But Catharine rejected this idea. "Let me, at least, have the consolation of believing," replied she, "that he has acted from conviction."

"Write to him," said Duplessis.

"Alas! what can I say? he has placed a gulf between us, that neither can cross."

She did, however, write the King a tender and

affectionate letter. "Man," said she, "cannot judge your motives ; God alone sees the heart. Though now of a different faith, we are still children of the same family. There is but one God and one Saviour, and at the throne of heaven our prayers must meet."

Duplessis, at the same time, wrote a most vehement letter to the King. He expressed his apprehensions, that the advisers, who had been powerful enough to silence his conscience, might also extinguish his good inclinations towards the people who once had the honor of calling him their protector ; that it was improbable, that he, who had not feared to offend God, would be more careful in giving offence to his subjects, since the step from pure religion to idolatry was far more wide than that from idolatry to persecution. He told him, that he expected the Pope would send him a consecrated sword, as a preliminary to absolution, requiring him to extirpate the heretics, once his friends, and now his most faithful subjects, and condemn them to the flames as a *feu-de-joie* for peace.

The answer of the King to this bitter epistle is truly mild and patient. "Come immediately," he says ; "I have loved you better than any man in my kingdom, come, come." Repeatedly he wrote to urge his coming, which Duplessis seems to have wished to avoid. "Come, come, he

writes again, come with all speed, for I want you, for reasons I cannot write ; make haste, if you love me."

Among the most distinguished of the Protestants, Duplessis had always been peculiarly regarded by the King, who relied upon his truth and sincerity. For a long time he was confident that Henry never would abjure his faith on any terms. Shame, sorrow, and involuntary alienation, kept him from the court when the news arrived ; but Catharine, who saw how much the reformed party stood in need of a zealous friend, urged him, at last, to repair thither, and present a memorial, exhibiting the various causes for fear and complaint existing with the Protestants. " We have been told to wait patiently," said he. " Have we not waited more than fifty years ? " Henry continued to show the utmost confidence in Duplessis, and seemed even more attached to him than ever. But it was only a few of the sturdy champions of reform, with the venerable ministers, that assumed this language. The greatest number of the Huguenots expressed the utmost joy at the elevation of the King, and the prospect of peace, and fully believed that new honors awaited them. Too many followed his example, and abjured the faith of their fathers. Maximilien de Bethune (Duke of Sully), who claims the honor of first suggesting to the King

his change of religion, was his friend and zealous adherent. At this time he was thirty-three years of age, and the King forty ; though he always professed the reformed religion himself, he was earnest for his master's abjuration, as the only measure that could secure peace to France.

The King had appointed Chartres as the place in which his coronation was to be performed, and he wrote to Sully to meet him there. Sully obeyed the summons, and found with him De Soissons and Montpensier, the son of his former violent enemy, Madame de Montpensier, the sister of the Guises. With the success of Henry her opposition to him vanished ; she was one of the first to hail him King, and perform the part of a parasite. The Duke, though several years younger than Catharine de Bourbon, had solicited her hand. Henry was favorable to this alliance. He liked him as a man, and in his wealth and possessions saw affluence for his sister, that he had it not in his power to bestow. Added to this, his dislike of De Soissons made him eager to place her beyond his reach, for he could not but know, that the constancy of their attachment had survived all obstacles. It was greatly the wish of Henry to conciliate the two Princes, De Soissons and Montpensier, and this was not an easy matter, as they both claimed precedence in rank, both were competitors for the same

posts of government, and, above all, for the same mistress, the Princess Catharine.

It was to reconcile these two rivals, that he had sent for Sully, in whose address and knowledge of character he placed implicit confidence. It is probable, that the King felt more fully than ever the importance of preserving peace among his subjects. It is evident, that De Soissons had not been charged with any very heinous treachery towards Henry.

Sully acquitted himself with his usual dexterity in reconciling the rivals to an appearance, at least, of harmony. The great cause of their enmity, however, still existed. Montpensier had conceived an attachment for Catharine equally as strong as that of De Soissons. When we recollect that time had been gradually stealing graces from her person, we have the strongest evidence, in the various attachments she continued to inspire, of the fascination of her manners and character. We have already spoken of the freedom which prevailed among the highest classes of society. A race of dissolute monarchs had succeeded each other, and the Court of Catharine de Medicis had become a proverb for its immorality. Catharine de Bourbon in this high-born circle stood alone. Uninfluenced by the worldly counsels of the Queen-mother, unmoved by the ridicule of the fair votaries of pleasure, uncor-

rupted by the flatteries that were poured into her ear, she steadfastly preserved the simple habits of the early reformers, and their somewhat Calvinistic modes of dress. She accommodated herself to the rules of the Synods, and wore her hair as they prescribed, even when the ladies Duplessis rebelled. Her dresses, though of rich materials, for she encouraged home manufactures, were neither flounced nor furbelowed ; she wore no cloth of gold, nor edgings of pearls and silver. The healthy simplicity of her life discovered itself in her pure, transparent complexion, the delicacy of which was heightened by the lawn kerchief that, in spite of Margaret of Valois' ridicule, shaded her neck. Contrast is often sufficient to seize the imagination. The chevaliers of the Louvre, without fully understanding what captivated them, yielded their homage, and the Duke de Montpensier was among the most zealous. Sully adroitly flattered both of the pretenders, and put them in good humor with themselves. He mingled, in his discourse with the Duke, anecdotes of Catharine, and described her early gayety, and love of society. "I was an awkward boy," said he, "when she first admitted me to her parties at Bearn. I remember well a ballet, that she got up, in despite of the Synod, and, when she insisted on my taking a part, and I confessed I did not know how to dance, the

Princess kindly taught me the steps herself, and she danced like an angel." *

With the Count he did not allude to Catharine, but talked of the favor of Henry, and promotion at the Court, and, in short, satisfied all parties. The King was so well pleased with the manner in which Sully conducted this negotiation, that he gave him another, much against his inclination, and this was to persuade the Princess to give up De Soissons, and also destroy the written engagement which had passed between her and her lover.

Sully was fully aware of the difficulty of attaining this object with a woman who could neither be flattered nor bribed into inconstancy. "I must stipulate one thing, Sire," said he, "that no suspicion be given her on the subject, and I must manage it wholly in my own way." To this the King at once assented, extremely glad not to appear in the matter.

We can scarcely repress indignation at the plot against Catharine's peace, contrived by this able diplomatist. He went to Bearn, where she was residing, and found that the Count had preceded him. It was evident, that the harmony and mutual confidence of the lovers was unimpaired. Sully says, "I found myself in the greatest per-

* Sully's "Mémoires."

plexity, how to accomplish my purpose. I knew it would not be easy to obtain the writing from a woman of her character, and still less to make her accede to the King's wishes, — to renounce the man she loved, and bestow herself on one whom she disliked. There was no possibility of succeeding but by artifice."

Let us now listen to Sully's reasoning on the subject. "What though, in deceiving her, I consult not her heart, at least I consult her interest, and prevent the misfortunes which the accomplishment of her wishes might bring upon the King and kingdom; and I flatter myself, that she will, one day, thank me for preserving to her the friendship of her brother, which she would lose by marrying the Count. The impossibility of succeeding except by stratagem determines me. As for the Count, I want nothing of him, and feel no attachment for him. The respect due to him ought to be laid aside, when it opposes public utility, and what the service of the King, my master, requires of me."*

Such was the reasoning of the great man, which seems to us hardly plausible, even when judged by the ethics of that period.

As the Princess lived much in retirement, and had held no Court since the *conversion* of the King,

* Ibid.

it was not easy for a man of the world, like Sully, to gain access to her without exciting some suspicions. Her life was passed in reading, and in performing kindly offices to those about her ; the brightness of it was gathered from her intercourse with the Count, in whose long-tried affection she found a solace for every evil. That De Soissons was ambitious, and might have formed hopes offensive to the King, is very possible, though history is by no means clear on the subject. Davila merely says, "that the Count de Soissons had gone over to the King of Navarre, and borne arms for him ; but, having afterwards repented following the party, by reason of its weakness and other respects, returned unto the King's obedience, by whose persuasions he very submissively asked pardon of the Holy See."

Catharine did not consider this step an unpardonable one, and only felt her happiness impaired by the evident alienation between her brother and lover.

Sully, aware of the state of her feelings, prepared his plan. A young man by the name of Du Perron was considered one of those tattlers, that are found in every age. Sully, after flattering him to a degree of intoxication, informed him, in strict confidence, that the King wished to conclude the marriage between his sister and the Count de Soissons ; that he thought it

was time the affair was brought to a close; and that there were only some very slight circumstances, which prevented his publicly announcing this intention.

The young gossip, as Sully had intended, communicated the important secret to two of the Count's intimate friends, also to the Princess herself, and the Countess of Guiche. The consequence was exactly what Sully expected. He went to take leave of Catharine, and saw in her manner an unusual degree of cordiality. The Countess of Guiche was also present. She soon introduced the subject of the King, and turning to Catharine, said, "This is the man who is best able to serve you."

The Princess does not seem, for a moment, to have lost her dignity or self-command. Addressing Sully with great sweetness, she said, "You know, that both the Count and myself have always esteemed you, you would greatly oblige me by restoring us to the good graces of my brother, the King, which I understand," she added with an insinuating smile, "have been a little alienated from us." Sully thanked the Princess for the honor she did him, and added, that, if he were sure of the discretion of those who heard him, he could inform them of many things which would not be indifferent to them. They gave him their promise of secrecy. The

diplomatist asked three days' delay, and took leave. Catharine threw herself into the arms of her companion, who participated with her in her happier prospects. Sully had adroitly conveyed the idea, that the King wished to bring the marriage to a conclusion, and that it remained with herself to remove the slight obstacle.

At the end of three days he again visited the ladies, but affected great reluctance to speak. After much urgency he told them, that he had prevailed on the King to open his heart to him upon the marriage in question, that he found he had no repugnance to it, but thought it a very proper one, and that, since he had no children, he should be rejoiced to adopt those of his sister, whom he could look upon as his own ; that the sweet and peaceable disposition of the Count was greatly to his taste, but he confessed, that the Count's attempt to deceive him, and obtain his sister without his consent, still prevented his hearty concurrence to the union. Both Catharine and the Count, who was now present, greatly regretted that such an attempt had been made. Sully assured them that the evil might be easily remedied ; that, if they would relinquish the written agreement they had mutually signed, and throw themselves entirely on the King's favor, and, moreover, bind themselves by another, not to marry without his consent, there was no doubt

but the King, in three months, would cement the union.

The contract they readily offered to resign, indeed it could not have availed them much; but they were unwilling to submit to a second, such as he had suggested. At length, however, he obtained one, releasing each other from all engagements, and submitting themselves wholly to the King, only annexing one condition, that it should not go out of Sully's hands, not even to the King. To this he gave his word of honor, and the writing was delivered, signed by both, and sealed with their arms.

Such was the consummate artifice used, which we have drawn from Sully's own confession. More cruel or disgraceful conduct could hardly be imagined. Well might he say, "The remembrance of the affair was always disagreeable to me." His *word* of honor he seems to have considered sacred, though there was little honor in his conduct. The King entreated him to give to him the second writing, but he retained it in his own hands according to his promise.

We must now quit Catharine, who had fallen into the snare so dexterously laid for her, and pursue the coronation of the King. His *sacre* was to take place at Chartres, but Davila tells us, there was a great difficulty about the *oil*. The true oil for the anointing of the King was kept

at St. Amhoul, in the cathedral of the city, and was brought down from heaven by an angel, purposely for the consecration of King Clovis. There arose also a competition among the prelates, who should perform the ceremony. At length, however, all was settled, and the vial of oil was brought in procession, under a rich canopy of state, set round with lights, and guarded by a troop of horse, and with that oil they anointed the King of France. Henry's abjuration of the reformed religion seems to have been complete, and his adoption of the Catholic equally so, Sully declares, "upon conviction of its truth."

CHAPTER XX.

HENRY THE FOURTH ENTERS PARIS. — SUCCESS
OF THE PLOT AGAINST THE PRINCESS.

MAYENNE was still at Paris, but wholly unable to support his position, and, on the 6th of March, 1594, he quitted it; and on the 22d, Brissac admitted the royal troops, and the capital, so long in possession of the League, was transferred to a new master. The entrance of Henry the Fourth resembled a triumphal one, rather than the reduction of a rebellious city. He immediately proceeded to Notre Dame, through an immense multitude, to return thanks to Heaven for its signal favor. Never did the judicious and noble character of Henry appear to more advantage than on this occasion. Courteous in his manners, punctual to his engagements, affectionate to his subjects, Paris exhibited the singular contrast, in one day, of a place entered by what they had considered hostile forces, and of a peaceful and well-ordered city. The Bastille, and Vincennes, were immediately surrendered to him; and we behold Henry of Navarre, whom

we have followed through so many vicissitudes, firmly seated on the throne of France.

At this period the following description is given of the King's person by a French writer. "Le roi avoit alors quarante-un ans. Les fatigues de la guerre avoient encore basané son teint du Béarn et des montagnes, sa barbe étoit épaisse et crêpue ; ses cheveux blanchis sous son casque d'acier, surmonté de quelques plumes flottantes ; il avoit de petits yeux brillans, cachés sous des joues saillantes ; un nez long et crochu, pendant sur de fortes moustaches gris ; son menton et sa bouche sentoient déjà la vieillesse au milieu de la vie. Il portoit sa cuirasse de guerre sur son coursier caparaçonné de fer comme en un jour de bataille."

This description, which evidently is not a flattered one, still brings the figure of a warrior and chief before us, and agrees with the celebrated historical picture, of his entering Paris, by David.

It must not be supposed, that Henry was now at liberty to sit quietly crowned with the laurels he had won. Still one half of the kingdom was in arms, and Henry, on the loss of Amiens, exclaimed, "We must resume the King of Navarre, we have played the King of France too long."

He took the earliest opportunity of requesting

his sister's presence, and received her with the most affectionate cordiality, assuring her he would never interfere with her religious worship. Catharine had too late detected the dissimulation of Sully, and, though she acquitted her brother of being concerned in the artifice, she perceived that her prospect of being united to De Soissons was more remote than ever. It was in vain the Count urged, that, as the last contract was drawn from them on false pretences, it ought to be considered legally void. She replied, "My oath was taken before God, not man, and he has not absolved me from it."

The Duke of Montpensier, who had fully proved his attachment to the King, was still in high favor with him, and more earnest than ever for a union with the Princess. In a conversation with Sully (whom we are tempted to call the King's gossip), he declared that his love for Catharine was not in the least abated by her coldness, but that he despaired of obtaining her heart, or of supplanting the Count de Soissons in her affection. When this conversation was repeated by Sully to the King, he determined to make one more effort in De Montpensier's favor, and rather injudiciously charged his favorite with this commission. After what had passed, Sully declared that he thought it presumptuous to embark in this attempt, and, probably heartily

ashamed of his previous conduct, entreated the King not to expose him to added hatred from the Princess and Count de Soissons. The King, who, in affairs of this kind, seems to have had but little tact, only replied, "A good master and a bold servant." Sully took the precaution to demand his commission in writing, and a letter of friendship to Catharine, from her brother. To the written commission Henry was extremely reluctant, but finally accorded it.

Poor Catharine seems doomed to have been the sport of imposition. She was at Fontainebleau, and thither Sully repaired. She had before, by a line from the King, understood he was to be there, and, with the sanguine feeling of an innocent heart, imagined that he came to inform her that her brother had relented. Sully, probably from reluctance to open his disagreeable errand, did not allude to it for the first two days, and they passed with an appearance of civility on the part of the Princess, who considered politeness due to the friend and chosen servant of her brother. On the third Sully broke the ice. This time he does not appear to have had recourse to dissimulation. He stated to her, that the Count's conduct had wholly alienated the King, and that he had determined never to give his consent to their marriage. The indignation of Catharine was justly roused. She reproached

Sully with his former treacherous conduct, and represented its baseness in glowing colors. The negotiator seems to have been astonished at what he might naturally have expected, he still, however, proceeded to profess unbounded respect and earnest desire to serve her, but begged her to hear his statement of the Count's treatment of the King. Thus urged, Catharine was silent, though unable to command those emotions of anger and disdain, which flushed her face, sparkled in her eyes, and, as Sully proceeded, gave a hue of deadly paleness to her countenance.

The accusations against the Count, though not amounting to any thing treasonable on his part, were, if she believed them, sufficient to alienate the King. There is a conviction in truth, which it is difficult to resist. She remained silent, that deadly sickness of the heart coming over her, which the unworthiness of any one we have thought highly of naturally inspires. Sully perceived that her confidence was shaken, when he brought proof after proof that the Count's conversion to the reformed faith was a mere artifice to obtain his purpose, and that he had since made the most humble atonement to the Holy See. Encouraged by his success, he proceeded to say, that "the measures he had before taken were wholly for her benefit, knowing the Count's unworthiness." Then her anger found vent in words.

"You do well," said she, "to remind me of the duplicity and falsehood of your conduct. I regret that the King has such an agent, and it is the only way that I can account for his opposition to my wishes, unless," added she ironically, "he loves me so well, that he cannot resolve to get rid of me.* I reject your base insinuations against the Count. I spurn them, and request you to leave me. You have made me miserable enough." The tears, notwithstanding her efforts to suppress them, fell from her eyes, and the energy with which she had spoken yielded to the tender recollection of her lover.

"Ah, Madame," replied Sully, "how deeply I regret causing you so much pain, but, indeed, there is a way that may yet set all things right, and repair past errors."

Again her tender recollections yielded to her anger, and she spoke with the bitterness of a wounded spirit. "Pray, Sir, have the kindness to inform me how these errors may be repaired."

"By the Count de Soissons' undoing all he has done," replied Sully. "But I perceive that, in my endeavours to serve the King, and those who are dear to him, I have incurred your everlasting displeasure. I will, therefore, obey your commands, and leave you."

* Anquetil's "History."

He was, by this time, fully convinced that it was useless to propose an alliance with the Duke de Montpensier, and he rose to go.

"Nay, Sir," said Catharine, by a powerful effort recovering her self-command, "it is not necessary that we should dwell on this painful subject ; rather tell me, how is the health of my brother, the King ? Does he give no more time to sleep ?"

"His habits are still the same," replied Sully ; "he thinks less of himself than others. He is never angry or impatient, but even his enemies are astonished at the sweetness and gentleness of his disposition."

"He was ever thus ;" said the Princess, "woe is me, that it has been my unhappy fate always to oppose his wishes, or sacrifice my own. I will see you to-morrow," she added with dignity, "at present I am weary."

Sully, though heartily tired of his commission, and convinced that he could not accomplish any thing, went to the Princess at the hour appointed the next day. She received him with cold civility, and saved him the trouble of speaking by beginning herself. "You have spoken what you call truths to me," said she, "and now I request you to hear some in return. You have more than once insinuated that you could set matters right. I decline your interference, and

will do my best to enlighten you as to your own character and conduct. No doubt you imagine that you have acted the part of a politician, in reality it has been that of a parasite, and base deceiver. You have attributed to the Count, and, I dare say, to myself, motives which only a heart like yours could conceive. For once you have failed in what you pride yourself upon, *knowledge of the world*, and have been guilty of the folly of a boy, in thus rashly meddling with the affairs of people so far above you. Remember, Sir, that you are but a private gentleman, subsisting on the bounty of the Princes of Navarre, and wanting in gratitude for past benefits.”*

Perhaps Sully might have endured this language more meekly had there been no witnesses ; but Catharine, fired with a sense of her own wrongs, determined to humble him, and was attended by gentlemen and ladies of her train. Her purpose seems to have been completely answered for the moment, for Sully immediately began to exculpate himself. “ Indeed, Madame,” said he, “ your Highness has greatly mistaken my conduct ; as to what I have said of the Count de Soissons, I am myself convinced of the rectitude of his intentions.”

* This account is taken from Sully's “Memoirs of Himself,” and also Anquetil's “History.”

“It matters not, Sir,” replied she contemptuously ; “he is as indifferent to your opinions as I am.”

Sully could ill support this degradation, to which, probably, his own conscience added peculiar stings. He had, for a moment, lost his self-possession, but he quickly recovered it. “Your Highness is pleased to reproach me,” said he proudly, “with being a private gentleman, and unworthy to approach you ; but I must beg leave to remind you, that though, by the prodigality of my ancestors, I am not possessed of the estates to which I have a claim, yet that above a hundred thousand crowns have been carried by the daughters of my family into the houses of Bourbon and Austria. I acknowledge that my present visit to you would have been impertinent, if I had not been commissioned by the King, your brother, to whom I have never been indebted for pecuniary benefits ; on the contrary, he has sometimes done me the honor to have recourse to me in his necessities.” He then drew the King’s letter from his pocket, and put it into her hands.

Had Sully ended here, it might have saved the concluding scene ; but, encouraged by the astonishment the letter produced, he presumed to add, that, as his Majesty held the place of father to her, and was likewise her master and king, it

became her to submit to his will, and, no longer listening to the Count, to resolve to accept a husband that her brother might select, or expect to lose his favor ; that, in the ample provision the King had made for her, he had consulted his own heart rather than the laws and customs of Navarre.

The Princess scarcely waited to hear the end of his sentence, but, expressing her indignation at his insolence, retired to her cabinet.

The day after these circumstances took place Sully set out for Paris, to meet his courier, whom he had sent from Fontainebleau to the King, with an account of his failure. Instead of his own messenger returning, he recognised one of Catharine's attendants. The young man gave him a letter, sealed with the Princess's seal. He opened it, and found it was from Henry, and, though addressed to him, had passed through her hands. Instead of the commendation and praises the trusty knight expected to receive, it contained a stern command "to make apologies to the Princess for his behaviour," adding that "his Majesty could not suffer one of his subjects to affront a Princess, and his sister, without punishing him immediately for his fault, if he did not repair it by submission."

Sully was greatly surprised, and appears to have considered the King's displeasure as de-

cided. "I had served him," says he, "with unwearied zeal for four-and-twenty years ; it was with the greatest reluctance that I had consented to this commission, and the King now said much more severe things to me in his letter, than any I had said to the Princess."

He seems to have been wanting in that knowledge of human nature in which he prided himself, in supposing that he might take the same position with her, as her king and brother. On this occasion he again had recourse to artifice, and feigned a severe illness. The good-natured Henry, unable to hold out, sent him his pardon, and a reconciliation took place.

It must be acknowledged, that the charges Sully had brought against De Soissons, corroborated by proofs that he had it in his power to give, had sunk deep into Catharine's mind. Circumstances, one after another, crowded on her recollection. For things that had perplexed her in his conduct she now found a clue, and the illusive confidence that had sustained her for so many years was fast fleeting. This appears to have been the bitterest period of her life. She sent for De Soissons, and had long conversations with him. The conviction grew in her mind, notwithstanding all his palliations, that she had been deceived ; that his renunciation of the Roman faith had been only a pretence, and that he had

engaged, even in the early part of their attachment, to make his union with her subservient to the Catholics. He could not conceal, in this revelation of his character, his bitter enmity to her brother, nor suppress his too well-founded sneers at *his* conversion.

Even Sully observes, that "the Princess had but one fault, too great vivacity of temper ; in all things else she was noble and generous."* The minister does not seem to have comprehended, that this vivacity of temper arose from a sense of justice and truth, and was founded in deep sensibility.

The mist was dispelled, which had, for so many years, obscured her perception of De Soissons' true character. She saw he was a shortsighted politician, a man of the world, without high and honorable principle, changing with the times, and using religion as an engine for his ambition. It was not *deeds* of which she accused him, there had been nothing *treasonable* in his conduct ; but the high and holy ties which bound her to him were broken, he was a different character from what she had believed. He was no longer the being that she had loved. "I have told you often," said Catharine, "that you alone could sever the bonds between us ; you

* Sully's own words.

have done it, and we must part. Difference of religious belief would not have separated us. I should have cherished the hope that we might, in time, have united in one faith. We must part ! find a wife among the daughters of your own people, and leave me to mine.”

CHAPTER XXI.

EDICT OF NANTES.

RESOLUTELY as Catharine pursued the course her conscience marked out, her health, for a time, sank under the struggle. Henry was incapable of appreciating the depth of her feelings, but he seems to have watched over her with fraternal affection, and tried to rouse her from the languor and depression that assailed her. He heaped worldly honors upon her, and promised her the full and entire liberty of worshipping in the reformed faith. Catharine was first awakened from the apathy that had taken possession of her mind by a letter sent to her from the Synod of Montauban.

“To you, Madame,” said they, “we now look for our sole *illustrious* patronage. Continue firm, we entreat you, in the true faith ; let not the persuasions of the King, nor the arts of the Romanists, prevail. Write to us, we beseech you ; give us comfort and assurance.”

"It is time," said Catharine when she received this letter, "that I shook off this sloth. I must be up and doing."

She immediately wrote to Duplessis, with earnest protestations of unshaken fidelity.

"All I see, all I feel, but the more confirms me in my convictions. May God never withdraw from me the light of his countenance. I can poorly express what I have endured for months past. It seemed as if the very fountain of life was dried up. I should have comfort in conversing with you on what I cannot write. You know well the pain my brother's abjuration has given me. But I have a strong hope, that, when the present unsettled state of affairs has passed away, he will, through God's grace, repair the breach, which, for the good of his people, he has now suffered to be made in his conscience. Do not believe any thing you may hear against me. If they still say I have been to mass, receive my denial in one word, that I have never been there either in act or thought. Neither does the King request it; he leaves me free in the exercise of my faith; of this I hope soon to give you a proof; and, depend upon it, I will not go to mass till you are pope in very deed." *

* Duplessis was said to be the pope of the reformed religion. And Henry afterwards alluded to it in a subsequent dispute with Du Perron.

From this time Catharine shook off the languor that had assailed her, and again health and animation returned. Perhaps the strongest proof she could give of the healthy state of her mind, was the pardon she accorded to Sully. For his wife she conceived a warm friendship, and at length included him in it. She had generosity enough to excuse his unworthy conduct to herself, when fully convinced that it arose from devoted zeal to her brother.

Henry solicited her to reside with him in Paris. This she deemed inexpedient for her and himself; but, wishing to fulfill the promise she had made Duplessis, of a decided proof of her constancy to the reformed faith, she accepted his invitation, and entered Paris with a large suite, in which were included several Huguenot preachers, and her own chaplain, La Faye. Immediately after her arrival the reformed worship was publicly celebrated, and the communion administered to three or four hundred professors, by her appointment, at St. Germain's.

During her visit to the King, who was residing at the Louvre, she had her regular worship, and permitted members of the reformed faith to meet, without distinction of rank. The Cardinal de Gondé was sent to Henry, with a formal deputation of the clergy, to complain of this strange desecration of the palace. The King angrily

replied, "that he thought it much more strange, that such language should be held to him in his own palace concerning his own sister." Catharine, after this proof of her fidelity to the Huguenots, gladly quitted the palace of the Louvre, which brought to her mind the most painful recollections, and retired to Fontainebleau.

Henry's situation was by no means enviable, though firmly seated on the throne. Both parties watched him with jealousy. The Huguenots were dissatisfied with his edict of 1577, because it did not grant enough, and the Catholics because it granted too much. Catharine's gentle but determined influence often did great good in allaying the unreasonable demands of the Huguenots. She represented to them the difficult situation of her brother, and how much they would injure their cause by rashness and complaint. It was not long before the Princess excited the suspicions of the Romanists, and their spies were placed about her. Jane, her mother, had assumed the part of an influential leader. Catharine was not called to the same exertion, had it been in her nature, but it certainly was not. She was a true woman, shrinking from observation, fervent in her affections, enthusiastic in her religious belief, and investing all around her with the beautiful creations of her own imagination. Though never lowering herself in any respect from her

high station, she would, probably, have been happier in a less conspicuous one. In her youthful days, and in the light gayety and trusting fondness of her heart, she often playfully said, "At any rate I must have my Count." Yet we have seen, that she could offer up her strongest affections on the altar of duty.

The King wisely forbore to urge the suit of De Montpensier, and the Princess was again tranquil and almost happy. But this tranquillity was interrupted by an attempt to assassinate her brother. The blow was aimed by a young fanatic, by the name of Chastel, who struck the King with his dagger as he was stooping forward. Fortunately the dagger entered his lip instead of his throat. Upon examination it was supposed that the society of Jesuits were the instigators of this attempt, and a process was instituted against them, which ended in their expulsion.

Henry seems to have believed that they were concerned in the matter, for he said, with his usual vivacity, pointing to the wound, "I have heard from the lips of others how little that reverend society love me, but I now learn it from my own."

Catharine sent a despatch to Duplessis, informing him of the attempt. He wrote both to the King and to her. His letter to Henry is written in the spirit of sincerity. He intreats him to

view "the hand of God in all events, and constantly trust in his protection." In his personal remonstrances, after his arrival, he takes a moral tone of reproof, that gives the highest idea of the King's candor and good-nature. His conduct was but too open to reprehension, and Duplessis was never faithless to his duty. He had positively declined Henry's invitations to the Court, from his disapprobation of what he must have witnessed. D'Aubigné, who was as firm to the Huguenot cause as Duplessis, and condemned the abjuration of the King in bitter language, does not seem to have ventured to extend his reproofs to his private conduct, even at this critical time, when Henry was smarting from the wound he had received. "Sire," said D'Aubigné, "you have as yet renounced God only with your lips, and therefore it is on those he is contented to strike ; but, if you renounce him with your heart, it is to your heart the blow will be directed."

It is highly creditable to the King, that he turned to these two distinguished sons of the reformed church in hours of peril. When dangerously ill he had recourse to D'Aubigné for religious comfort ; yet he was strictly observant of the mass, and of all the forms of the Romanists. Soon after this attempt at assassination the Pope was prevailed upon to grant Henry the ab-

solution for past heresies, which he had long been demanding, and which had hitherto been denied.

The Protestants still continued to hold their national Synods, and Catharine had sermons regularly preached by the reformed ministers, at which all classes of the same faith assembled. This occasioned some disturbance, and fanatical women accused her of distributing meat to the poor on good Friday.

It will easily be believed, that the Huguenots found a zealous friend and advocate with Henry in the Princess. There was now the most perfect harmony between them, and the King often consulted her on the Huguenot affairs ; it was his earnest wish to do all for them he could, consistent with what he owed to his Catholic professions. When Catharine took up her residence at her own hotel, she had worship performed every Sunday, at which usually there were seven or eight hundred Protestants present. But, though this toleration existed at Paris, a melancholy outrage was committed at Poitou. While a congregation of about two hundred were convened on the Sabbath, a garrison at Rochefort poured its soldiers upon them. All the Protestants were murdered, even the helpless infant brought for baptism. One little boy, when they approached his mother, offered them all the money he had, if they would not take her life ;

it was eight sous. Henry severely punished this outrage ; but the Huguenots were loud in demanding an edict from the King, that would protect their rights, and allow them to educate their children ; and for this purpose they framed a petition. The remonstrance was long, fervent, and impressive, and was aided by the tears, the prayers, the entreaties of Catharine. The result was the celebrated edict of Nantes, in 1598. This secured to the Huguenots an access to high offices in judicature ; and schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions, were indiscriminately thrown open to followers of either faith. The whole edict included ninety-two articles. It was not till 1599, that the forms were completed, and the Parliament of Paris consented to acknowledge and register the reformed party as an established body of the State.

The influence of Catharine was fully recognised by the Huguenots in this favorable edict, and the enthusiasm they had felt for the brother was transferred to the sister. She made a visit to Angers, and, while there, three thousand persons received the communion with her. The Princess, in this benign disposition of affairs, seemed to have attained all she now expected of earthly happiness. On one of her visits to the Louvre, she became acquainted with Charles, Duke de Bar. He was the son of Lorraine, her former

wooer. It would seem, that the admiration which animated the father had been entailed, with his fortunes, upon the son. From his first introduction he zealously sought her society. Catharine was then in her fortieth year, and, though looking nearly as well as ever, imagined, as those do who have experienced disappointed affections, that the season had passed for feeling or inspiring emotion. Not so the Duke; the few years' difference in their ages was to him no obstacle, and, to the surprise and regret of the Princess, she found that she had new difficulties to contend with. He was a man who had passed the first season of youth, and stood high with both parties. Henry saw at once the advantages that would accrue from the union, and warmly seconded his suit. Even De Soissons, who had wooed and won another lady, expressed his hopes that he might succeed. Catharine rested her opposition to the marriage on the difference of their religion, but, at length, weary of opposing, she wrote to the Synod, that, without aid, she could no longer contend against two so powerful opponents, as her brother and Lorraine. The Synod were most willing to enter their protest against it, and judged the marriage utterly unlawful, prohibiting all Protestant ministers from performing the ceremony, on pain of being deposed from the ministry.

The Duke expressed the most earnest wishes for the conversion of the Princess to the Catholic faith ; and the King, in the hope of effecting it, gave orders that a solemn discussion should be held on the chief points of difference between the two churches, in the presence of his sister. Catharine, willing to show her disposition to oblige him, consented to it, but claimed the privilege, probably not so remarkable then as it would be now, of retiring to her bed to hear the discussion, with the curtains closed round it, that she might not be exposed to observation. Dr. Duval was matched against Tilenius, of the reformed church. The two champions resorted to scholastic subtilties, and heated themselves to no purpose. Sully gives an amusing account of their final reference to him for the victory, but he declined hearing the arguments.

The Princess declared herself unconvinced, and the Pope refused to grant a dispensation, so that the prelates could not perform the marriage ceremony. At length, however, Catharine yielded to the solicitations of her brother, and, probably, the secret inclination of her heart, and the service was performed hastily and unceremoniously in the royal cabinet.

However averse the Huguenots were to this connexion, they had no reason to regret it. She continued firm in her belief. " There is nothing,"

said she in a letter to Duplessis, "that I find hard to resist, but the affectionate and gentle persuasions of my husband." He, on his part, was exposed to continual persecution for having married a heretic. In all things but religion there was a perfect agreement between them, and, by the additional wealth he conferred upon his wife, she was enabled to make her charities still more extensive among the impoverished Huguenots.

The treaty, always distinguished by the name of *l'Edit de Nantes*, was not concluded and signed by the King till nearly a year after it was framed ; it was signed the 13th of April, 1598, and composed not only of the ninety-two articles, but fifty secret ones beside.

Thus terminated the struggle, which had for so many years deluged France with the blood of her own children. Sismondi says, "No epoch in the history of this nation better marks the termination of the old world and the beginning of the new." From this time an era begins, wholly detached from the one that preceded it ; a new impulse of mind, a new system of monarchy, and a new history of France. It may not be amiss to review the period through which we have been passing. The actors, with whom we have been conversant, have, one by one, vanished, and but few remain that have taken part in preceding transactions. Henry the Fourth,

though comparatively young in years, is the link which connects the old with the new. When he entered Paris he was in the prime of life, having just completed his forty-first year. Though born to hereditary honors he had been accustomed, from infancy, to roam fearlessly among the Pyrenean mountains, careless of danger in its natural forms. Scarcely inferior to the chamois in activity, he leaped over the frightful ravines, scaled the loftiest summits, and looked with a steady eye on the rapid torrents roaring below. He heeded not the vicissitudes of the seasons, and, when hungry or thirsty, shared the viands of the lowliest peasant, and drank from the mountain spring. Trained to war by the skilful and brave Coligni, present, at the age of fourteen, at the battle of Moncontour, he could with difficulty be prevented from mingling in the fight. We behold him, after the massacre of St. Bartholomew, a captive at the Louvre, enslaved by his own love of pleasure, through the artifices of Catharine de Medicis, and compelled to profess a religion contrary to his conviction. Nor was this the most fatal stab to his honor and happiness. Margaret, his wife, seems to have interested herself in completing his degradation. At length, however, he burst the ignoble bonds, and escaped from the Court of France. Though often in arms, he was, in truth, a fugitive and an

exile in a remote corner of the kingdom beyond the Garonne, and frequently persecuted by the Guises. Nearly destitute of territories or revenues, (for his ancient patrimony of Navarre was constantly the prey of the Spaniards,) he stood forth the distinguished leader of the despised Huguenots. His Court, whether held at Pau or Nerac, was crowded with gentlemen and adventurers, attracted by the courtesy, the valor, the amenity of Henry's bearing. His very faults were imitated and admired; his modes of dress, of living, and of exercise became those of his followers. The energy of his mind found an agent in the health and activity of his body; in the camp he was indefatigable, indifferent to accommodations, patient of hunger, and asking but short intervals of sleep. Tolerant in his religion, not an instance of persecution is recorded against him; in victory he was as merciful to the Catholics as to the Protestants, who were his own subjects. Though possessing the highest ideas of royalty, he assumed nothing for himself. Sully's "Memoirs" give us the portrait of a distinguished individual, rather than of a sovereign. Cheerful and frank-hearted, he was never depressed by adversity, or elated by good fortune. Observant of his promises, faithful to his word, superior to all art and duplicity, economical without meanness, forgiving under injuries, he, at that period, seemed

to bear a new character among the race of men. His education had been a first object with his noble mother ; he was conversant with the Greek and Latin classics, and, though not studious, was well acquainted with literature.

Thus far we might present to the New World a hero scarcely inferior to our Washington ; but the parallel line suddenly diverges. Let us not pursue Henry to the retreats of private life, let us not plead the profligacy of the age, the pernicious examples of the Louvre, or the faithlessness of his wedded wife ; but let us turn to the spotless warrior and chief of our own Protestant race, and thank God that such a model remains to us.

Many of Henry's striking observations have become traditionary in his own land. When the Duke of Savoy inquired of him what might be the revenues of the kingdom, Henry replied, " Whatsoever I require, because, in possessing the hearts of my people, I can command every thing ; and, if I am permitted by the Almighty to exist two years longer, it is my intention that each peasant in my kingdom shall, every Sunday, have sufficient means to put *la poule au pot* " (the chicken in the pot). This saying is still used for indicating comfortable circumstances.

Henry's observations were often touching, and discovered deep reflection. " Much is said respecting my prosperity," said he ; " yet, if those

who pay me these compliments had uniformly been near my person from the period of my royal father's death, they would have found that there was much cause for modifying their remarks, and that my disappointments have counterbalanced my prosperity. It is not from my avowed enemies that I have suffered most, but the ingratitude and abandonment of many of those who called themselves my friends and my allies, or my subjects and servants."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DIVORCE AND SECOND MARRIAGE.—DEATH
OF CATHARINE, THE PROTESTANT PRINCESS.

THE rapidity with which political events have passed has scarcely permitted a moment's pause for domestic affairs. Margaret de Valois had long since been sequestered in the Castle of Usson, and not only Henry, but the French nation, became earnest for a formal divorce. To this Margaret seems willingly to have assented, and Henry, in a confidential conversation with Sully, discussed the various matches which were considered eligible.

“That I may not draw upon myself a misfortune,” said he, “which with justice is said to exceed all others, a disagreeable wife, it is necessary for me to find a woman that possesses five or six things, for instance, beauty, prudence, gentleness, wit, riches, and royal birth.” The Infanta of Spain, Arabella Stuart of England, the Princesses of Germany, all were reviewed by Henry, and

all rejected. Others were then suggested by Sully, but none was satisfactory. At length he ventured to suggest marrying his favorite, the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom he had created Duchess de Beaufort. Sully remonstrated with spirit against this disgraceful alliance, but Henry seemed determined to persevere. When Margaret heard that her rival had been mentioned by the King as her successor, she declared, that, rather than be thus disgraced, she would protest against the divorce.

To divert the King's mind from this headstrong purpose, he was persuaded to make an excursion through the different cities. Wherever he arrived, long speeches and addresses were made to him, of which he was heartily weary. One of them repeated often, "O very benign, very merciful, very great King." "Add too," said Henry to him, "*Very weary.*" Another began his address with "Agesilaus, king of Lacedæmon," "*Ventre, saint gris,*" exclaimed Henry impatiently, "I have heard that people spoke often to this Agesilaus, but always when he had dined, and I have not." To another he said, "Pray reserve the rest for another time ;" but, finding he persisted in going on, he added, "Well, I am going, and you must say the rest to Master William." This was the court fool.

Henry seems to have possessed the art of being playful and familiar without impairing his own dignity, or giving offence. There is little doubt but Gabrielle had determined to be Queen of France, and probably would have effected her object had she not been suddenly summoned to her last account. Her death was so violent and unlooked for, that, as usual, suspicions of poison were promulgated. She was seized with strong convulsions, and, though the King was summoned, she died before he arrived. The grief of Henry was creditable to his heart. He dwelt upon the good qualities of his friend, upon the sacrifices she had made for him, and demanded from the Court all external signs of respect to her memory. He wore mourning, and the courtiers did the same; but there were none that did not view her death as a fortunate circumstance, Henry excepted, who, in the deepest solitude, bewailed his loss, and strove to support himself with calmness when in public. "Do not think," said he, "that it is merely a beautiful woman I regret; place my attachment to its right account, to sympathy of mind and disposition."

Those who take pleasure in studying out the worst parts of character, will remember the intimacy that he afterwards formed with Catharine Henrietta d'Enragues, to whom he gave a written contract of marriage. The divorce between

Margaret and her husband was sanctioned by the Pope, and a negotiation formed for an alliance with Mary de Medicis. She was spoken of for her beauty, and the peculiar *modesty of her deportment*; such was the successor to Henry's favor. The marriage took place at Florence by proxy. Henry had great apprehensions for his future happiness, and seems to have merely *submitted* to the transaction. The experience he had had of matrimony was unfavorable to happy anticipations, and his Florentine bride he had never seen.

It was several weeks after the marriage by proxy, before Mary arrived at Lyons, where she awaited the arrival of the King. He embarked on the Rhone, and met her there. Whatever might have been his feelings, he was never deficient in courtesy or good manners, and he welcomed the Queen of France as became its King. The marriage had been performed at Florence with extreme magnificence. The Cardinal Aldobrandini officiated on the occasion. Accompanied by a splendid retinue she coasted the Genoese territories, and arrived at Marseilles just sixty-seven years after Catharine de Medicis, conducted by Pope Clement the Seventh, had arrived at the same city to marry the Duke of Orleans, afterwards Henry the Second.

The King sent many of the first nobility to

meet her, nor were they wanting in congratulations ; for this union was looked upon as the confirmation of national prosperity. When Henry arrived from Savoy, equipped as a soldier, the ceremony of the nuptials was performed with the greatest gayety and splendor.

But little more than a year after this marriage took place, we behold France in a state of perfect tranquillity. We have traced it through civil wars, through domestic and foreign commotions. Henry, who had spent the best part of his life in a camp, was now to devote himself to the arts of peace, to the improvement of the nation, and to the habits of Catholic devotion. Soon after the entrance of his wife to Paris, he accompanied her on a pious excursion to Orleans. Though France was sometimes threatened by coming storms, Henry, by his wisdom and vigilance, dissipated them. He now showed himself an able statesman and politician. Sumptuary laws were judiciously enforced, which his own example rendered easy ; public abuses were remedied, and usury was banished. To complete the happiness of the nation a son was born to them, afterwards Louis the Thirteenth. When the infant was presented to him, the King took him in his arms and invoked upon him the blessing of Heaven ; then, placing his sword upon the child's head, he supplicated the Almighty, that he might " never use it but for

His glory, and the salvation of France." The multitude crowded round to behold the royal offspring, and when Henry perceived that the attendants tried to prevent them, he exclaimed, "Let them approach; this infant is the property of every individual."

This was the first lineal successor to the crown for more than forty years (since Henry the Second). His birth caused general rejoicing, and the King, overcome with emotion when he first received the intelligence, knelt and offered up his prayers and thanks.

It might be now supposed, that Henry was in possession of what a heart so affectionate as his must have coveted, domestic and conjugal happiness. But the consequences of our errors and follies are entailed upon us. Henrietta d'Entrague, better known as the Marchioness of Verneuil, had always refused to surrender the written contract of marriage that she held from the King, and even behaved with the greatest degree of insolence, publicly asserting, that she was the true Queen of France, and Mary de Medicis a usurper. Such observations were repeated to the Queen by her Italian confidants, whom she had brought with her, and also information was given her of the contract held by the Marchioness.

The Queen did not patiently receive this communication, and Henry soon found, that "the

gods make scourges of our vices." Between the two he was driven almost to desperation, and seems to have lost all heroism before the angry rivals. The Marchioness knew the power her beauty and fascination gave her. Mary had all that could be derived from legal ties, from her claims as the mother of the Dauphin, and as Queen of France. An event took place at this time, which brought affairs to a more decided crisis. One evening, as the King and Queen were returning from St. Germain to the Louvre, the horses, in crossing the Seine at Neuilly, took fright, and leaped over the side of the boat. Henry received no injury, but the Queen narrowly escaped being drowned, and was rescued only by her long hair, by which she was dragged from the water. Henry's tenderness and good feelings were fully awakened towards his Queen by this alarming accident, and there was a short period of mutual confidence. The Marchioness was soon informed of this unpropitious state of things, and, having secured an interview with the King, exerted all the malignancy of her wit to make the *river-scene*, as she called it, ridiculous. Strange to say, Henry suffered himself to be amused, and in a short time Mary was in possession of all that had passed. Her indignation knew no bounds, and she demanded of the King an annihilation of the contract, which the Marchioness

still held. Henry, fully convinced that this was the only way of securing a tolerable degree of repose, at length compelled Henrietta to surrender it. She did not submit to this requisition without the most violent transports of rage, and heaping upon the King, who was unwise enough to continue his interviews, the most vehement reproaches. Henry, in his account of the conversation, afterwards, to Sully, says, "Her language concerning the Queen was so contemptuous, that I could scarcely refrain from *striking* her, and was actually obliged to quit her abruptly, lest I should commit some excess of anger."

When Sully expressed his own indignation at the conduct of the Marchioness, the King began to make excuses for her, from her strong attachment to him ; praising her wit and vivacity, and her desire to please him. "I find nothing of this," said he, "at home. I find no disposition in my wife to amuse or interest me. When I enter her apartment she receives me with a cold and indifferent air, and I am driven to seek a pleasanter reception elsewhere."

He seems to have had an earnest desire to be on better terms with his Queen, whose conduct was often injudicious, she reproaching him both in public and private. She undoubtedly felt a strong and sincere attachment to her husband, but her mind was narrow, and her wrongs were great ;

and she did not consider his general indulgence towards her wishes, the outward respect which he always demonstrated, and his occasional sacrifices, any compensation for his want of fidelity. Henry in vain strove to attribute the irritated state of her mind to her Italian confidants; conscience, if it speaks in a low, small voice, is articulate and clear, and makes itself heard by the mentally deaf.

Meanwhile the angry Marchioness resolving to be revenged, entered into a conspiracy against the King with her half-brother, the Count d'Auvergne. Many were drawn into this plot, which was happily defeated, and the conspirators, after having been tried and condemned, were finally pardoned.

In 1604 the death of the Duchess de Bar took place. We escape for a moment from the busy scenes before us, to follow her to her last, peaceful home. Her life was clouded by disappointment; but after her marriage she seems to have enjoyed as much happiness as usually falls to the lot of women. She is spoken of as a rare example of conjugal affection, and, notwithstanding the difference of faith between herself and her husband, there was on other subjects the utmost union. Their opposition in religious opinions was a cause of deeper regret and anxiety to him than to her, as he considered her salvation

greatly endangered by her heresy. It has been previously mentioned, that she acknowledged that her greatest trial was in his gentle but earnest persuasions. She persevered, however, to the end. She was carried to Vendôme, and buried in the tomb of her ancestors, by the side of her noble mother, Queen Jane of Navarre. Henry was deeply afflicted by her death. Her affection for him through all her trials had never been diminished ; and the pangs of disappointment he had occasioned her as to the prevailing traits of her character, love and religion, came with bitter regret to his own heart.

He received letters of condolence from all the crowned heads in Europe. Even the Pope sent his nuncio, to make his "compliments of condolence," and express to him his Holiness's fears for the salvation of the Princess, who had died out of the bosom of the Church. Henry replied with warmth and some degree of indignation, that he considered it inconsistent with the goodness of God, to suppose that he could not open the gates of heaven at the last moment. "I have not," said he with emotion, "that bitter pang added to what I now feel ; not a doubt with regard to my sister's salvation exists in my mind." His touching exclamation, when informed of her death, shows the state of his feelings. "All ! all ! mother and sister !" How many painful

reflections must have thronged upon him. *They* slept together in one faith, and he, the hope of both, had deserted their cause. He remembered the bright and sparkling gayety of his sister's youth, and saw it wasted before long-delayed and frustrated expectation ; yet she had dearly loved him to the last, and died with blessings on her lips. What was the poor tribute of external mourning in which both his and the Queen's household were clad ! there was that within which could not be expressed.

The munificence of the Duchess towards the Huguenots had involved her in debts before she left Paris, which she had made arrangements to pay, when her sudden death took place. Her marriage jewels she had consigned to her creditors. These were redeemed, after her death, by her husband and the King, and her affairs were finally settled.

It may be mentioned, as a curious circumstance, that her debts scarcely exceeded eight hundred pounds sterling ; though at that time they were regarded as so considerable, that the King did not think proper to take some valuable pictures she possessed into his possession till they were all cleared. Her brother delighted to load her with benefits, and had given her a palace at Paris, a chateau at Fontainebleau, and another at St. Germain. The palace in which she principally

resided was, after her death, bought by the Count de Soissons. There is something striking in this last demonstration of first and early attachment. Indeed the Count appears, through life, to have preserved the recollection of this period, and never forgave Sully so freely as Catharine had done for his interference.

The death of Catharine was deeply felt by the Protestants. Nor was it long before they realized how much they had owed to her protection. The King, at her solicitation, had permitted her to have regular worship at her residence ; and, though contrary to the Edict of Nantes, suffered thousands of the reformed to congregate there. After her death the strict letter of the Edict prohibited the reformed service at any spot within five leagues of Paris. It was not till some time after, that Henry permitted them to meet at Charenton, within two leagues of Paris. On the first Sunday a congregation of three thousand persons attended.

It must not be supposed that the Huguenots were idle during the course of political events. A conference was held at Fontainebleau between Duplessis and Du Perron, each a staunch supporter of his separate faith. The King, on this occasion, was thought to have exhibited undue partiality to the Catholic champion, and Duplessis was treated with neglect and harshness. Du

Perron came forward under great advantages, for though, like his King, educated in the Protestant faith, he had, like him, abjured it, and become a convert to the Catholic doctrines. Henry must have felt a secret leaning towards such a champion, celebrated for his learning, distinguished for his eloquence, and of unquestionable morality. As a theological disputant he had acquired celebrity among the Protestants, and formerly held able controversies at Paris in favor of the reformed religion. He now entered the lists against it, and labored with the utmost assiduity in making converts to the Catholic faith. When called to appear as the antagonist of Mornay Duplessis, the public interest was greatly excited. The latter had been the counsellor, the friend, and companion of Henry, and the constant adviser of Catharine of Bourbon. It was a trying situation for the King, and probably he would gladly have prevented the controversy; but it was injudiciously urged by the Protestants, and even by Duplessis himself, who stood on equal ground with Cardinal Du Perron in birth, talents, and learning. He had travelled through various countries, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and England, during the reign of Elizabeth, who received him with the greatest cordiality. At the Court of Navarre he had been distinguished by the Protestant nobility, and obtained such

supremacy, that he was styled by the Catholics "The Protestant Pope." After Henry abjured, we have seen, that Duplessis retired from the Court; but, when urged to take the lead in a religious disputation, he did not shrink from the controversy. Buoyed up by his unshaken integrity and his conviction of truth, and expecting a candid hearing from his former pupil, Henry of Navarre, he probably anticipated victory. If human pride mingled with his anticipations, and prompted his purposes, he was doomed to receive a painful, though perhaps salutary lesson. The particular cause of the present controversy was an elaborate treatise Duplessis had written on the Eucharist. Sixty-one disputed passages were submitted to the council, and he was to prove the truth and antiquity of the doctrines there maintained, and cite his authorities. This conference has interested religious polemics, but can excite no curiosity among promiscuous readers; it is only the result that is at present important. The King, with a brilliant assembly, appeared in the council-hall, and the commissioners, after each of the disputants had spoken, passed judgment on nine of the disputed passages, pronouncing them impositions and without authority.

Duplessis found himself in wholly a new situation. Henry, with all the generosity and nobleness of his nature, had often been humbled by

his reprehensions. It is too accordant with human nature not to suppose, that the King was willing the uncompromising judge should be brought nearer to his own level. It undoubtedly appeared, that great laxity had been used in these articles, and imaginary passages had been attributed to some of the fathers. Duplessis pleaded, that he had given the *spirit* where the letter was not exact, and repelled with indignation any accusation of fraud. Many passages, however, were ranked under that head, and the controversy was suspended till the next morning. Duplessis appears to have been deeply wounded by the whole proceeding. His natural hesitancy in speaking, which, perhaps, arose from the depth of his feelings, was unfavorably contrasted with the fluent elocution of Du Perron and his impetuous oratory. He retired for the night, exhausted and depressed, and before morning was attacked by fever and acute bodily pains.

The King, who probably had found the conference equally fatiguing to himself, at once decided that it should be ended. That evening he gave invitations for a banquet in the council-hall, "in order," as the light-hearted monarch expressed himself, "that he might sup on the field of battle." He discovered no relenting towards his early friend, and Duplessis suffered greatly from this total alienation; but his influence with

the Huguenots remained unimpaired. This controversy took place in 1600, several years before the death of Catharine, Duchess de Bar. Her sympathy and esteem greatly mitigated the mental sufferings of Duplessis; indeed, this admirable woman, without compromising her loyalty to her brother, always contrived to administer comfort and strength to her "own people," as she emphatically called them.

Henry, however, expressed his determination to abide by the Edict of Nantes, and the Protestants felt strong confidence in his good-will. A national synod had been holden by them at Gap, in Dauphiny, calling the Pope "antichrist, the son of perdition." At this synod they also appointed D'Aubigné historiographer to the reformed churches.

This meeting, and the abuse lavished upon the Pope, were truly injudicious; but Henry, though much offended, does not appear to have withdrawn in any degree his protection.

In 1605 the Jesuits, who had been banished the kingdom, were restored, and permission was given to demolish the monument perpetuating the attempt of Chastel upon the life of the King. We cannot but reflect, with admiration, upon the tolerant spirit of Henry, so unlike the age in which he lived.

In 1609 the King received a letter, informing

him, that the Huguenots were secretly taking up arms, and that Duplessis was the great instigator of this conspiracy.

We have seen Sully often in a light that cast deep shadows over the brightness of his character. It is grateful to observe the part he took on this occasion. He risked something of his own popularity in undauntedly declaring, that the whole letter was a vile slander, and standing forth as the champion of the rejected Duplessis. The King demanded his proofs, and Sully was not slow in collecting them. This was the more generous, as the two distinguished men had always been hostile to each other. Duplessis could not forgive the minister for the part he had taken in the abjuration of Henry, but he at this time spoke with the utmost gratitude of his ready interference. The King's suspicions were effectually removed. Duplessis, after experiencing all that the world has to bestow of vicissitude in human opinion, retired to his chateau of La Forest, in Poitou; there, among true friends, and surrounded by the venerable groves of his ancestors, he breathed his last, in 1623.

His long life carried him far into the reign of Louis the Thirteenth. A historian, whom we have often quoted, says, "No brighter example than that which Duplessis' life affords is exhibited by history. His lot fell upon evil times, and was

cast in a perverse generation ; and of the passions and intrigues which distracted his country he was seldom permitted to remain a calm and unconcerned spectator. More than half a century indeed was spent by him in active collision with turbulent events, and in unremitting endeavours to direct and guide them to the advantage of his brethren.”*

The influence of his mind over the Huguenots can hardly be estimated. He stood alone, and must always continue to do so, in their annals.

The death of his antagonist, Cardinal Du Peron, took place at Paris, in 1618. His memory is dear to the Catholics ; he was one of their ablest defenders during the reign of Henry the Fourth, and was universally esteemed for his erudition and his integrity. Both long outlived the monarch whom they had both effectually served at different periods of their lives ; and they also lived to realize that princes, however great, must fall like men.

* Smedley.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DEATH OF HENRY THE FOURTH.

NOTWITHSTANDING a few interruptions, the Huguenots might be said to enjoy great repose. In 1607 a union of the two churches was projected. D'Aubigné met these proposals with sarcasms, and all hope of persuading the Reformed to unite with the Catholic Church were abandoned. The King had it greatly at heart to make converts of the Protestants ; how much the salvation of their souls was his object, we must leave others to judge. He endeavoured to bribe and persuade Sully to abjure as he had done ; but, though he had advised Henry to this measure he firmly rejected it for himself ; and, ambitious as he undoubtedly was, and vain, and self-sufficient, as we have seen him, he positively refused all bribes, and remained true to his professions, much to the chagrin of his royal master. Henry had been greatly indebted to the Duke of Bouillon, one of his early friends in his adversity, and, on his accession to the throne, he made him

Maréchal of France. Subsequent circumstances, which had implicated him in the fate of the unfortunate and guilty Biron (upon which we have not touched) induced him to quit France. He had been one of the Huguenot leaders, and was powerfully supported by them. Though his conduct was unjustifiable, the King, upon his submission, received him into favor.

In the year 1606 Henry beheld himself in possession of a prosperity, which left him little to wish for his kingdom. James the First had succeeded Elizabeth on the throne of England, and was no competitor in power or talents. Spain had yielded to the vigor and watchfulness of Henry, and slumbered in peace. The family of Lorraine, once so powerful, now sued for protection.

France was at peace abroad, but at home, at his own Court, all was in commotion. The great monarch, the arbiter of Europe, was made wretched by the consequences of his own misconduct. The resentment and jealousy of the Queen were constantly augmented by her Italian confidants, Concini and his wife Leonora, to whose influence she seems implicitly to have yielded herself. The King, justly dissatisfied with the power they possessed, was eager to banish them, but had not resolution, or perhaps possessed too much respect for his wife, to insist upon their

departure, and, therefore, intrusted the negotiation to Sully, who wholly failed in it. The palace of the Louvre was a scene of perpetual altercation, and it was evident to all France that, in case of Henry's death, the Italian and his wife would rule. There are strange inconsistencies in character; Henry, so brave in war, so decided in public affairs, was weak and timid when called to act in private life, for he was humbled by the consciousness of his deviations from virtue. He would have done wisely had he sent back these base incendiaries to Italy, but he seems to have been incapable of pursuing any conduct which appeared arbitrary to the Queen.

We pass over the last cause of unhappiness to Mary in the King's attachment to Charlotte de Montmorency, afterwards Princess of Condé, though the story is one of thrilling interest. The Prince, compelled by Henry's infatuation, to escape by flight, took his wife on horseback behind him, and obtained shelter with Albert and Isabella at the Court of Brussels. This is said to have been the origin of a projected war against Austria and Spain, for which a powerful league was formed by Henry. Mary had a strong predilection for the house of Austria, and saw, with concern and disapprobation, the King's alliance with the heretical States of Germany, who had joined the league. Instigated by the Italians,

she accused Henry of making the Princess of Condé the sole cause of the war, and though he patiently strove to explain to her its political bearing, and the vast schemes he had formed of dividing Europe into fifteen States, and forming from their union a "*République Chrétienne*," which should enjoy perpetual peace, Mary considered the whole as an artifice. Sully, however, fully admits that this was a plan long concerted by Henry, and even mentioned to Elizabeth of England. The execution of his designs would necessarily require a long absence from his kingdom. Mary, at the instigation of Concini, insisted on being declared regent during this absence. Henry assented; she then proceeded to demand a formal coronation, to make her person more sacred. The King, at first, declared that it was impossible, both from want of time, and the expense that must be incurred. Mary, however, persisted, and Henry, as usual, yielded; and on the 13th of May, nine years after her marriage, the coronation took place at the church of St. Dennis. However unwillingly the King had acceded to this demand, he appears to have finally consented to it with his usual courtesy. He assisted at it as a private spectator, and, though then fifty-six years of age, inspired general admiration by the charm of his manner, which, through life, seems to have possessed an

uncommon power of captivation. On this occasion he was frank, social, and dignified, and Mary was said to have exclaimed to Leonora, in Italian, "If he were mine alone!" It is difficult to say, whether this cheerfulness of manner was assumed by Henry, or whether his natural buoyancy had banished the gloom which hung over him. Whatever was the cause, all the French historians agree in describing him as haunted for several days by the most terrible apprehensions. Sully speaks fully on the subject, and, if we credit him, we cannot doubt that the King's mind was unusually agitated. He even burst into exclamations of grief and regret. There are certain instinctive perceptions, which can scarcely be accounted for. Perhaps we derive them from a natural chain of thought. Henry knew that his motives for the vast enterprise he was about to undertake had been misrepresented. Condé had taken refuge with Fuentes, his mortal enemy. Nor can we doubt, that many tormenting self-accusations rose to his mind. He was one of those

"Who know the right," "and yet the wrong pursue."

Perhaps the depression that weighed upon his spirits was partly made up of remorse, and, let us hope, of repentance ;

"Conscience does make cowards of us all."

On the morning of the 14th of May, 1610,

Henry busied himself in preparations for his departure. After having dined, he lay down with the intention of getting repose ; but, finding himself unable to sleep, he went into his oratory, and passed so long a time in prayer, that his attendants ventured to interrupt him, and inform him that the carriage he had ordered was ready. He seated himself in it with seven noblemen. It was a fine day, and the curtains were drawn up, not only on account of the beauty and warmth of the weather, but to enable the King to see the preparations making for Mary's entrance to the city. The street through which they were passing was narrow ; they met two carts, one laden with wine, the other with hay ; the greater number of attendants passed beyond the carts to give more room to the royal coach ; two footmen only remained, one was occupied in clearing the way, and the other stooping to adjust a part of his dress. At this moment Ravaillac, stepping on a stone as the carriage halted, and placing one foot on a spoke of the hind wheel, struck the King on his left breast. The instrument glanced on one of his ribs ; the assassin repeated the blow, and the knife entered his heart ; the blood rushed impetuously upwards and suffocated him in a moment. The noblemen present, having got out of the carriage, caused the curtains to be lowered, and it was ordered back to the Louvre. A cloak

was thrown over the King, and, that his death might not be suspected, a surgeon and restoratives were ordered. The effusion of blood was so great, that the carriage, and even the street, were stained with gore. The Queen was in her closet when the sad news was brought to her, and rushed out, wild with terror. "Great God," she exclaimed, "the King is dead!" The Chancellor, who was present, said, "The Kings of France never die! We must take care that our tears do not ruin our affairs; we have need of remedies, not of grief."

"I ran to the King's closet," says Bassompierre, "when I heard the fatal news, and saw him extended on his bed. M. de Vic, Counsellor of State, was sitting upon the same bed, and had laid the cross of his order upon his mouth. Milan, his first physician, was sitting by the bedside, weeping, and the surgeons stood near to dress the wound. The windows were open, and once we mistook the low sighing of the wind for his voice, but in a moment the physician cried out, 'Ah, it is over; he is gone!' M. Le Grand, as soon as he entered, kneeled at the side of the bed, and took his lifeless hands and kissed them. As for me, I threw myself at his feet, which I held, weeping bitterly, and embracing again and again. And there he lay, still and motionless; he who, but a few hours before, was the life of

every circle. It seemed as if all waited for him to break the silence ; not a sound was uttered. The children of the King were brought into the chamber, and no one was suffered to approach them. Every measure was taken to deceive the people till the Queen's regency was declared, lest there should be some popular commotion. About nine o'clock in the evening a number of the nobility rode through the streets, and, as they passed, said to the people, ' Make way for the King.' It being dark, the people thought he was amongst them, and cried aloud, ' Vive le Roi.' It was only in the quarter of the Louvre that the truth was known. At night the dreadful farce was continued ; they dressed the King, and washed him with the same ceremony as if he had been alive ; one gave him his shirt, another held the *serviette* or napkin, and a third stood ready with his robe-de-chambre."

Thus ends our narrative of Henry of Navarre. We feel as if the spirit of history had taken its flight, and a solemn awe is creeping over us. Never was there a more sudden transition from life to death.

It did not appear that Ravaiillac had any accomplices ; probably, at the present day, the verdict would have been insanity. It is not wonderful that the indignation of the whole kingdom should have been poured on the vile assassin.

Nor is it necessary to sum up Henry's character. Sully has done it ; " He was candid, sincere, grateful, compassionate, generous, wise, penetrating, and loved his subjects as a father."

However heavy the calamity of Henry's death might be to the French nation at large, it fell with peculiar force upon the Huguenots. While he abjured their faith for himself, he protected it for *them*. His noble demeanor to the Parliament of Paris cannot be forgotten. " You see me here, in my cabinet," said he to them, " not as the kings, my precedessors, were wont, in royal robes and in a habit of ceremony ; nor as a prince who gives audience to ambassadors, but dressed in my ordinary garb as a father of a family, who would converse with his children." When some opposed, " I know," added he, " there have been parties in the Parliament, and that seditious preachers have been excited. I will put good order into those people without waiting for it from you. I will shorten by the head all such as venture to foment faction. I have leaped over the walls of cities, and shall not be terrified by barricades. I have made the Edict,* let it be observed. My will must be executed, not interpreted. I am King ; as such, I will be obeyed."

However despotic may seem this language,

* In favor of the Protestants.

it was adapted to the genius of the Parliament. They retired and obeyed.

The restoration of the Jesuits was an instance of the King's magnanimity, never to be forgotten. He felt that their learning, and superior skill in the science of instructing youth, were invaluable to the nation. Low motives may be attributed to him, as they have been, of fear and policy, but a man is to be judged by his general character, and Henry knew neither fear nor art. The only instance of injustice in Henry's conduct towards the Huguenots, was contributing to the polemical defeat of Duplessis, and the triumph of his enemy; and probably some emotions of disgust might have prompted to this from the high tone assumed by the Protestant champion. Perhaps it was not till after his death, that they were fully aware how truly his protection had been afforded to them. The Huguenots had universally and constantly declared their allegiance to the King; and when Gonthery, a Jesuit, mentioned the Protestants as "vermin and vipers," and said that "the race might easily be exterminated, if every one would clear within their own space," Henry expressed his indignation at such language. Duplessis' reply to this torrent of abuse was calm and dignified. He said, that the Protestants honored the King, not because he was sanctioned by the Pope, but in his own right of succession, and for

his own virtues ; as such they should always continue to honor and serve him with true loyalty. Henry, like all earthly monarchs, often found his brow encircled by a crown of thorns. Independent of domestic unhappiness, under which his *truant* heart quailed, were the painful conspiracies that occurred during his reign. Charles de Gonnault, Duc de Biron, was Admiral and Maréchal of France. Henry distinguished him by his favor, and sent him ambassador to England and other courts. During the civil wars he was highly useful to his master ; but the taste for pleasure that he contracted, and the restlessness of his ambition, led him into conspiracies with Savoy and Spain. Probably his inordinate love of gaming proved his ruin. He was beheaded in 1602. Other conspiracies were equally painful to the King ; that of the Count d'Auvergne, the Maréchal de Bouillon, and, above all, the one instigated by Henriette d'Entragues.

The history of the Huguenots is so intimately connected with the early part of Henry's life, and with the greater part of his reign, that it would be difficult to separate it from that period. Though embracing the Catholic doctrines, he never ceased to view with indulgence the reformed religion, or to remember that it was the faith of his maternal ancestors.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SKETCH OF THE AGE OF HENRY THE FOURTH.

IT cannot be uninteresting, to those who have followed us in this history, to give a slight sketch of the age of Henry the Fourth. The historians of that time were Brantôme, D'Aubigné, Davila, and De Thou. L'Etoile ought not to be omitted, who seems to have been the journalist of the period. Casaubon, Scaliger, and Pasquier, may also be included. Sully's writings, making due allowance for his vanity, are, perhaps, the most valuable. He tells us what he saw, what he said, what he heard, and what he did ; and though we cannot always trust to his inferences, probably we may to his facts. He certainly gives us a vivid picture of the first sovereign of the Bourbon line. The oratory of that day was said to be pedantic and strained, and Henry himself to afford the best specimens ; he spoke in a brief, energetic, and simple manner, mingling familiarity with dignity. His language came warm from the heart, and was delivered in an animated and graceful manner ; it was a style wholly his own ; all acknowledged its power and excellence, but none attempted to imi-

tate it, for they felt that it was a natural gift, and not to be acquired. Of the poets of that period we have but few specimens. Malherbe has been highly estimated, and by succeeding critics compared to the English poet, Gray ; but the genius of the two languages does not admit of the comparison. Regnier was another poet. Du Bartas was the most admired of his time, and particularly favored by Henry, but he has sunk into oblivion. France, at this period, boasts of no distinguished artists in painting or sculpture.* Vouet flourished under the reign of Louis the Thirteenth, and had given early specimens of his powers in painting during Henry's life. Poussin was his successor, and for a little while his contemporary. Sully patronized medals, and annually presented them to the King, as we find from his own account ; and they possessed a degree of excellence. The French Drama was yet in a rough form, and derived all its polish from the imitation of the Italian theatre. Romances were generally stories of rural lovers, to whom druids, vestals, and nymphs lent their aid.

The Court of Henry, till after his marriage with Mary de Medicis, was held without form or

* It will be remembered, that Leonardo da Vinci expired in the arms of Francis the First, but the nation seems not to have caught inspiration from the pencil of the great artist.

splendor. Though, at the time his sister Catharine resided there, some advances were made in refinement, it was not till the arrival of Mary de Medicis that luxury and elegance were introduced. When Henry entered Paris, in 1594, with Gabrielle d'Estrées, he wore a gray velvet suit, very plain, though shot with gold, a gray hat, and white feather. At his nuptials with Mary he was dressed in white satin, embroidered with gold and pearls, and a *toque* or Italian turban, which Henry the Third had introduced, sparkling with jewels. Gabrielle does not appear to have been behind Mary de Medicis in elegance of apparel; "she was carried in an open litter by the side of Henry, and wore a robe of rich black satin, covered with 'pearls and jewels of such lustre, that they dimmed the torches.'" They entered by torchlight. The scene was noble and imposing. Gabrielle was remarkable for the beauty and brilliancy of her jewels; her taste in dress was usually fine; yet, on particular occasions, Brantôme says, "she heaped jewels upon herself in such quantities, that she could scarcely stand under their weight." She was particularly fond of taking them from her dress, and presenting them to those around her whom she wished to recompense, giving them, by so doing, as her vanity led her to suppose, additional value. It must be remembered, however, that these munificent gifts were replaced by the exchequer of France. Margaret of Valois,

Henry's former wife, had very costly dresses ; and, seized with a sudden fit of devotion, she presented one of them to the church, adorned with gems of great value. Mary de Medicis introduced a more prevailing extravagance ; all who entered her presence were required to be sumptuously clad, and even Henry seems to have conformed to her wishes in this, as well as in many other respects, which did not agree with his own habits or taste.

In the annals of France but little mention is made, at this period, of the art of medicine. In England, at an earlier period, we find celebrated physicians. The King, from his royal dignity, was supposed to inherit the faculty of curing the *King's evil* by his touch. Immediately after his entrance into Paris numbers resorted to him. With his usual good humor he did what was required of him, though probably he had much doubt of his own miraculous power. The fondness for play, which easily degenerates into the habit of gambling for immense sums, prevailed during Henry's reign. Sully gives an account of the King's losses, and his promises to abstain for the future.

The prevalence of banditti ought not to be omitted. Throughout the vast tract of France, extending from the river Loire south to the Garonne, life and property were insecure. In 1602 the evil increased to such a degree, that mercantile transactions were wholly interrupted. It

would seem that effectual measures ought to have been taken by Henry to extirpate these robbers, but they pursued their depredations for several years. By degrees some light was thrown on the subject. The heads of the banditti were four brothers, by the name of Guilleri. They retained under their command four hundred desperate followers. Their retreat was a fortress among the rocks, inaccessible to those not acquainted with its modes of entrance, which were subterraneous. This garrison was near Niort. The Guilleris grew, at length, so audacious as to affix inscriptions by the high roads, announcing their *principles* and objects in these words. "Peace to gentlemen; death to provosts and archers; the purse of merchants, life safe if delivered without opposition. Let the officers of police keep out of the way; their graves are dug." It was not till the year 1608, that measures were adopted for attacking the Guilleris in a regular manner. Orders were given by Henry to the Governor of Niort to collect a sufficient number of troops for the desperate enterprise. An army of four thousand men collected, with pieces of artillery. They stormed the castle occupied by the banditti. When the case became desperate, the robbers sallied forth, sword in hand, and endeavoured to fight their way through the enemy. They were overpowered after a desperate resistance. One of the brothers was

taken alive, with about eighty of his accomplices. We need not look further for the cave of Gil Blas, or for the Rolandos, and Abaellinos, of romance.

In the course of the preceding narrative we have often mentioned Theodore Beza, the distinguished Protestant minister, the friend of Jane d'Albret, of her daughter, Catharine of Navarre, and the biographer of Calvin. This venerable old man was seized with an illness in the eighty-seventh year of his age. He possessed the force and vigor of his mind to the last moment of his life, and died exhorting all around him to preserve their faithfulness to the reformed religion, and to make its truth and beauty clear by the holiness of their example. It is a tribute to Sully's character, that Beza expressed the utmost confidence in him, and dedicated a book to him, called "A Treasure of Piety." He did not die till 1605, and lived to see the lives and property of the Protestants amply protected by Henry the Fourth. He had passed through the most sanguinary period, and had beheld the Huguenots slaughtered in every direction, and their extermination declared "a holy war in God's service." Montluc, who seems to have been sincere in his religious devotion, considers all heretics as subjects for death or torture. Nor do we find any noble instances of toleration on the Protestant side for Catholics, till Henry of Navarre set the example. It is circumstances like those which

followed his flight from the Louvre, after his renunciation of the Catholic religion, when he procured the freedom of worship for the Catholics at Rochelle, the *Huguenot asylum*, which brings the conviction, that *his* mind was in advance of the age. We might dwell upon his clemency and humanity ; but enough has been said to interest those who love to contemplate the bright side of human nature. Henry the Third, perhaps, afforded more patronage to learning than Henry the Fourth. Notwithstanding his dissolute life, Davila says he was in the habit of reading the works of Polybius and Tacitus.

The most celebrated seminary in France was the College of Navarre, at Paris. Henry the Third, Henry the Fourth, the Duke of Guise, and all the children of the nobility, were educated there. The College of Guienne received the youth of the southern provinces. Andrew Govea was the president. Under Henry the Fourth, almost all controversies were carried on in Latin. He honored and cultivated literature, but had not the enthusiasm for it of Francis the First. His restoration of the Jesuits, before alluded to, was from his firm conviction, that they were the best instructors of youth ; and, in his desire for promoting learning, he forgot that they were his personal enemies. The plague, or an epidemic as fatal, frequently ravaged Paris, which was probably owing to the defective police. Though

usually confined to the lower classes, it sometimes reached the Louvre. In 1606 Margaret of Valois lost three of her household, and retired to one of the villages for security.

These sketches, slight as they are, show us the progress, that has since been made in the great and populous city of Paris.

Henry the Fourth prohibited duelling under pain of death and confiscation of property, for the seconds as well as the principals. His patronage to men of letters was surprising for the period. "I would rather," said he, "that my table should be curtailed in its expenditures, in order that men of letters, and those who read to me, may be nobly remunerated." His love and respect for literature seem to have been hereditary on the maternal side. Margaret of Valois, his grandmother, sister of Francis the First, was an author, and also Jeanne d'Albret, his mother. His sister, the Duchess of Bar, had the art of extemporizing with her harp. That Henry composed verses, there is proof in the lines and music addressed to "La charmante Gabrielle."

" Charmante Gabrielle,
Percé de mille dards,
Quand la gloire m'appelle
A la suite de Mars,
Cruelle départie !
Malheureux jour !
Que ne suis-je sans vie
Ou sans amour ?

Partagez ma couronne,
Le prix de ma valeur ;
Je la tiens de Bellone,
Tenez de mon cœur.
Cruelle départie !
Malheureux jour !
C'est trop peu d'une vie
Pour tant d'amour." *

Peter Mathieu had been employed by the League, and had insulted Henry by a tragedy called the "*Guisade*." The King, however, bore no ill-will to him, and, when in want of a historian, selected him to record his own life.

Mathieu spoke of Henry's predilection for the fair sex ; "*Ventre saint gris*," said Henry, using his favorite exclamation, "What need is there to mention that ?"

"It is my bounden duty," said the historian ; "my office is to record facts, and I cannot omit it."

"True," said the King, after a pause, "it is requisite you should speak the whole truth ; for, were you to remain silent as to my faults, no one would credit the rest. Be it so ; let them stand on record, that my son may learn to avoid them."

He purchased Catharine de Medicis' library, which was left in Italy, united it to the Royal Library, and made acquisitions of Spanish and Arabic writings.

* Copied from "Henry the Great, and his Court."

Many amusing anecdotes and sayings are recorded of Henry the Fourth ; and they have value, as giving insight to his character. Sully tells us, that, some days before the battle of Ivry, Henry left the army and went *incognito* to Alençon ; he alighted at the house of an officer, to whom he was much attached. The officer was with the troops. His wife received him as a friend of her husband's, of high rank, and treated him with the best she had. Henry, however, was very quick-sighted, and he soon perceived some anxiety on the brow of his hostess. " Has any thing unpleasant happened, Madam ? " said he ; " I see some embarrassment ; speak frankly, I beg of you."

" I will honestly tell you, Sir," said she ; and then went on to inform him, that the whole village could furnish nothing for supper. " One of our neighbours, it is true, has a fat turkey, but he will not part with it unless he may come and partake with you ; a most unreasonable condition, as he is nothing more than an obscure mechanic."

" Is he a good companion ? " said the King.

" O, certainly, Sir, we have none so pleasant or entertaining among us. Besides, he is an honest man, a true Frenchman, and a zealous royalist."

" O, Madam, let him come, by all means ; I feel an excellent appetite, and, even if he is a little fatiguing, I had much rather sup with him than not sup at all."

The man came in his Sunday clothes ; the turkey was excellent, and the King was much amused by the mechanic's conversation. When supper was over, he suddenly threw himself at the King's feet, asking pardon of his Majesty for the plan he had laid, to secure an interview, having recognised him as he entered the village. The hostess was greatly overcome, when she found she had been entertaining royalty, and also threw herself at the monarch's feet.

" There is only one way, Sire," said the mechanic, " that you can wipe off the stain of supping with a man like me, and that is, by granting me letters of nobility."

" Thou ? " exclaimed the King with surprise.

" Why not, Sire ? though a mechanic I am a Frenchman ; I have a heart, and feel worthy of the honor, if for no other reason than my love to my King."

" Very well, friend," said Henry, " what will you have for your coat of arms ? "

" I desire no other than my turkey."

" Be it so, then," exclaimed the King, bursting into a hearty laugh ; " thou shalt be a knight, and bear the turkey for thy coat of arms."

His descendants, in 1761, still bore the hereditary title, and held the property attached to it in the neighbourhood of Alençon.

